Perceptions of Syncope in Medieval French Literature of the High Middle Ages:
the Function and Cultural History of Fainting

By

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Perceptions of Syncope in Medieval French Literature of the High Middle Ages:
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Abstract

This dissertation analyzes the diverse instances of syncope in Old French Literature from the first appearance of the verb to faint, "pasmer," in the eleventh-century hagiographical text *La Vie de saint Alexis*, to the epics, the romances based on classical antiquity, the works of Chrétien de Troyes, and the thirteenth-century romances of the Arthurian *Lancelot en prose*. In literature, syncope ranges from a simple collapse or swooning to an extended period of unconsciousness or trance-like paralysis, and results from factors such as distress, injury, illness, love, joy, fear, or indecision. In addition to being physical, psychological, or emotional, fainting can be gendered in unexpected ways, as the male characters lose consciousness most frequently. In this study, I show that syncope highlights certain events and characteristics, externalizes emotions, dramatizes illnesses, unveils hidden love, shows the effects of broken relationships, and depicts the consequences of actions. Moreover, it can have a deeper signification, symbolizing an outer manifestation of sin or a loss of power. Interestingly, the increasing role of syncope in literature coincides with the increasing popularity of medical learning, treatments, and herbals during the High Middle Ages.

The first chapter shows that hagiography uses fainting to emphasize overwhelming emotions after the loss of a loved one, while the masculine world of epic poetry illustrates that a loss of consciousness can be ideological, showing the knights' unwavering devotion despite suffering. Transitioning to the *romans d'antiquité* of chapter two, the paradigm of syncope extends, and the poets emphasize love's emotional toll with fainting as a symptom of lovesickness in both men and women. In the third chapter, fainting and trances are visible in the protagonists of Chrétien de Troyes's romances, as characters struggle to restore relationships, escape to be with a lover, hide emotions, obey a courtly lady, and understand God's love. In the concluding chapter, syncope aids in characterization in the *Lancelot en prose*, and the greater

psychological focus on the characters is evident in instances of trance-like unconsciousness. Syncope is much more than a dramatic spectacle, and authors use the motif to redirect attention to important characters, themes, or events.

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Table of Contents

Perceptions of Syncope in Medieval French Literature of the High Middle Ages: the Function and Cultural History of Fainting

Medieval medicine interests scholars from diverse disciplines because of what it reveals about science, history, culture, and literature. While much has been written on the disabled or diseased body, particularly leprosy, the plague, or wounds, this study examines the ubiquitous aspect of syncope in medieval French literature. Fainting enriches the narration and authors do much more than simply state that a character loses consciousness, as detailed descriptions illustrate the reasons behind their state, the changing physical appearance of the fainting character, the reactions by other characters, or the return to consciousness. The frequency of collapses in myriad texts, characters, and situations makes fainting a fascinating area of research, and analyzing the broad paradigm of syncope clarifies why authors chose to employ it in medieval narrative. This interdisciplinary project combines medieval medicine, cultural and disability studies, manuscript studies, and Old French literature of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Focusing on these centuries allows a broad analysis from the earliest literary appearances of fainting in the hagiographical text *La Vie de saint Alexis* to the prose romances of the *Lancelot en prose* where narrative description is more elaborate, and the visual descriptions and development of characters are more complex. Syncope follows the same pattern, as descriptions and expression of emotions or injuries that often cause fainting become more detailed in prose. In the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, diverse hagiographical texts, epics, verse romances based on classical antiquity, short narrative poems, and verse and prose Arthurian romances feature episodes of fainting that are much more than dramatic and often humorous scenes. Analyzing the different instances of fainting in these texts is of interest because it elucidates the narrative functions of syncope, provides insight into medical practices and

treatments, illustrates how literature expresses perceptions of fainting, and reveals how the spectacle of men and women fainting represents a gendered phenomenon.

The semantic field of the word syncope coming from a Greek root meaning " to cut off" or "to weary" includes many types of loss, suppression, and omission. Its meanings range from a syncopated rhythm or shifting accent in music, a grammatical suppression resulting in the contraction of a word, to a heart condition[1], but it is commonly associated with a medical loss of consciousness. Old French literature first expresses the idea of medical syncope with the verb "pasmer" beginning in the eleventh century hagiographical text, *La Vie de saint Alexis*. Etymologically, the modern French verb "(se) pâmer" comes from the Old French "pasmer" and the Latin "pasmare" or "spasmare," meaning to spasm. [2] Texts most frequently employ a form of the verb "pasmer" to define a character's condition, and variations occur to illustrate the types of syncope. For example, *planctus* or mourning scenes containing syncope in hagiography and the epics commonly add that the character falls fainted to the ground, using forms of the verbs "choir" and "pasmer" to illustrate a character's collapse. On the other hand, a loss of consciousness during battle often includes the details that knights faint on or off their horses. These slight changes in phrasing develop a pattern for fainting in certain genres, and help the reader understand the gravity of the situation, as similar descriptions continue to be used in later texts. For example, instances of syncope in the romances that include a character falling fainted to the ground highlight the complete devastation after a loved one's death, first seen in the *Vie de*

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1 "syncope, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2014.

2 This etymology provides insight into the earliest appearances of "pasmer" in Old French literature. "évanouir," "pamer." *Grand dictionnaire etymologique & historique du francais*. 2005. "esvanir," "pasmer," "pasmir," "pasmee." *Dictionnaire de l'ancien francais*. 1999.

"Spasmare" derives from the noun "spasmus," which originated with the Greek word meaning "to pull." "spasm, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2014.

saint Alexis. On the other hand, Roland in the *Chanson de Roland* is the iconic character that cannot be defeated and constantly faints on his horse. In Chrétien de Troyes's romances, causing a knight to faint from his horse is an important sign of defeat.

In addition to the verb "pasmer," the twelfth-century *Roman de Thèbes* uses a form of the verb "esvanir" to describe a loss of consciousness from despair, and the *Roman d'Enéas* employs "espamir" to explain fainting as a symptom of lovesickness. As the paradigm of syncope enlarges to include a trance-like state mimicking a loss of consciousness, the adjective "esbhaiz" and other verbs such as "s'entroblier," "s'oblidar," and "panser" or "penser" become frequent to describe lovesickness or Arthurian characters lost in thought in Chrétien de Troyes's romances and the *Lancelot en prose*. As we will see, syncope diversifies from the earliest texts and it is interesting to analyze the variations in phrasing and verb uses in order to understand the nuances in meaning throughout the High Middle Ages.

The complex paradigm of fainting extends from a simple collapse, as characters can feel weak and nearly faint, to collapsing several times in succession, swooning from love, remaining in an extended period of unconsciousness, or being lost in thought and entering a trance mimicking syncope. Occurring in numerous texts, characters, and circumstances, instances result from diverse factors such as injury, illness, love, despair, joy, fear, or indecision. In addition to being physical, psychological, or emotional, fainting can be gendered in unexpected ways. While the epics present a few women characters, fainting is almost exclusively reserved for men and relates to injury or death on the battlefield. On the other hand, the increased focus on emotions in the twelfth-century verse romances offers many instances of lovers' swoons and emotional faints in both men and women. Continuing with Chrétien de Troyes's verse romances and the prose romances of the *Lancelot en prose*, syncope is not strictly masculine or feminine.

In both men and women, the presentation of fainting depends on the cause and may or may not be dramatized. While some texts briefly mention a collapse causing the episode to seem unimportant, others provide detailed descriptions that emphasize the motif. Mentioning that a character almost loses consciousness can be just as revealing as complete collapses because both redirect attention to the fainted body. Syncope discloses something about the text and the body, as the physical body cannot remain conscious because of overwhelming emotions, injury, or sickness. This fainted body then helps elaborate and guide the text as authors rely upon the motif to emphasize certain scenes, characters, and themes.

In order to guide the narration, fainting first grabs the attention of the reader because it appears as a spectacle in the text. Grotesque wounds and skin diseases such as leprosy receive focus in imaginative literature because they are easy to recognize and often carry a social stigma, as graphic and dramatic details describe the characters. François Jérôme Beaussart examines this function and explains:

> c'est sans doute ce désir de mise-en-scène du corps malade ou souffrant qui justifie la nécessité de le décrire longuement et précisément dans la singularité de ses symptômes alors même que le corps sain ne fait l'objet que de représentations stéréotypées. Mise en scène mais aussi fascination morbide pour ce corps qui, à travers les métamorphoses qui le transforment, rappelle tout simplement sa présence irréductible à ceux qui tentent de l'ignorer (13).[3]

The body itself becomes the site of a spectacle and focus centers on the disease. Descriptions of the healthy body may be uninteresting, but the diseased, atypical character is fascinating.

[3] Beaussart examines this role of illness and healing as he studies miracles in the *Miracles de Nostre Dame* by Gautier de Coinci. However, his idea of sickness as a spectacle is useful to apply to many different genres and illnesses, including fainting.

Similar to disease, syncope distinguishes a character whose behavior is out of the ordinary, and a dramatic collapse creates a bodily performance both for the reader and the other characters while also serving as an external marker for an inner state. Since fainting has numerous causes that are often not immediately recognizable, the spectacle provokes curiosity and causes questions to arise about a character's health, or moral or emotional state. Authors provide reactions to syncope, and depending on the text, characters may discover an unconscious body after an unnoticed faint, witness the event and state their reactions, reproach a character for collapsing, or faint themselves. These different reactions are prevalent, as for example, knights in the *Chanson de Roland* witness Charlemagne's despair and loss of consciousness after Roland's death, join in his grief, and all faint as a result. In the *Roman de Thèbes*, King Adraste tells Polynice to fight instead of mourning and fainting, and Count Oringle in Chrétien de Troyes's *Erec et Enide* assumes that Erec is dead upon discovering his fainted body and tries to take Enide as his wife. In the *Lancelot en prose*, Gauvain repeatedly faints from injury, and the members of Arthur's court assume he will die.

In addition to reactions from those who witness the spectacle, the reawakened character can also respond in a variety of ways. Some reawaken to a reality that causes them to faint again, while others change their mindset or can be compelled to act. As characters withdraw due to overwhelming emotions or injury, the circumstances to which they awaken can be the same or present new challenges. In Chrétien's *Chevalier au Lion*, Yvain faints after realizing he broke his oath to his lady, reawakens, and loses consciousness again because his grief is too great. In the hagiographical text, *La Vie de saint Alexis*, characters realize that their emotional distress is not justified, as the pope interjects that the family should rejoice in the saint's death instead of abandoning themselves to despair. As we will examine in the first chapter, the *Chanson de*

Roland offers a classic example of a soldier passing out and regaining his senses in order to act. Roland faints after the death of his comrade, Olivier, and death and destruction surround him. Yet his loss of consciousness allows him to refocus and concentrate on his duty in battle instead of focusing on his despair. Finally, trances offer unique opportunities for the author to reveal a character's thoughts. In this instance of syncope, a character withdraws from society in a semi-conscious state, and other characters become curious and try to break the trance in order to understand its cause. Arthur in the *Lancelot en prose* is a compelling example since he is often lost in thought due to his guilt. His knights then use comical measures to awaken him, including blowing a horn, slamming a gate, or pulling his napkin out from under his arm. Moreover, when characters in trance-like states of syncope are disturbed, they react with anger or annoyance either because the interruption is impolite or they prefer their thoughts to reality, as is the case of Lancelot in *Lancelot du Lac* who only finds joy thinking about his lady.

While seeing different reactions to a loss of consciousness or awakening is interesting, syncope is much more than a spectacle in the text. Each instance creates an interruption in the narration as characters lose their senses, collapse, swoon, enter a trance, or faint. In her broad philosophical analysis of syncope, *La syncope: philosophie du ravissement*, Catherine Clément examines musical syncope and states that by prolonging time, it creates and accentuates a delay that also causes anticipation (55, 133). Applying this idea to a character's loss of consciousness in literature shows that fainting pauses and slows the narrative time as all action seems to stop while the reader and other characters react and anticipate what will happen next. Throughout this study, I use the terms "delay" or "pause in narrative time" to indicate the slowing effect surrounding the unconsconsious character. The narration does not completely stop, as the narrator's descriptions or other narrative action still occur, but the instance of syncope, whether a

loss of consciousness or trance, causes a marked shifting of focus and slowing of narrative time. Narrative time, in the terms of both Gerard Genette and Paul Ricoeur, comprises both the time of narration, or "Erzählzeit" and "temps du raconter," and the narrated time, or "erzählte Zeit" and "temps raconté" (Genette 77; Ricoeur, *Temps* 113). When an author uses syncope to create a delay, the time of narration can be slowed due to elaborate descriptions of the sensations before a faint, the reactions of the other characters during the period of unconsciousness, and the resulting scenes when the character reawakens. Depending on the instance of syncope, the narrated time slows and accelerates when a character remains unconscious for seconds, hours, or days; narrated action stops waiting for the character to awaken. Syncope therefore affects both the time of narration and narrated time, causing the narrative time to slow. *Pyrame et Thisbé* offers a prime example of this effect when lovers' monologues and syncope slow the narrative time to emphasize the emotional suffering of lovesickness.

During a delay in narrative time, characters are seemingly absent from reality as they lie unconscious and all action pauses. This effect is clearly visible in trance-like states of syncope, and the author of *Lancelot du Lac* frequently employs this technique for the protagonist. Lancelot becomes so absorbed in his thoughts that he is completely unaware of the world around him, even as his horse submerges him in the river. However, a delay is much more than a simple pause followed by resumed action when the character regains consciousness. As this study will show, the interruption allows an author to emphasize the importance of a certain character in order to highlight emotions such as suffering, love, or sadness.

In her study on syncope, Catherine Clément begins by detailing the different significations of the word in dance, music, and grammar, and most importantly shows that syncope creates a pause. While her book offers philosophical arguments focusing on literature

and philosophers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that do not pertain to this study's analysis, Clément enumerates various types of syncope that are useful to elucidate the paradigm of fainting in Old French literature. In my chosen texts, despair and loss of hope are a major cause of fainting and trances to the extent that characters often withdraw to mourn. Clément labels depression as a social syncope and signals the troubles with sleep that accompany this state (47). A lovesick character, such as Lanval in Marie de France's *Lais*, provides an example of social syncope after he loses hope when his lady rejects him and isolates himself. Unreciprocated love creates depression and despair, but mutual love can also be a sort of syncope. Love makes the world seem like it is fainting away (273), and Clément terms love at first sight as a sort of shared syncope (33). Love at first sight is visible in many characters, including Eliduc and Guilliadon in Marie de France's short narrative poem *Eliduc*, and the young lovers of *Pyrame et Thisbé*. Most notably, shared syncope characterizes the relationship of Lancelot and Guinevere in both Chrétien's *Charrette* and the *Lancelot en prose*. While Clément focuses on later periods of literature, she does mention *Tristan and Iseut* to illustrate how Tristan is a "héros-syncope" (295). With his delayed and impossible "amour-fou," delays and anticipations characterize Tristan (298-299), and this idea can be applied to Lancelot in the *Lancelot en prose*, whose situation mirrors the circumstances that *amour-fou* creates.

In addition to its associations with love and despair, Clément discusses other functions of syncope that are visible in imaginative literature. Her analysis becomes more philosophical and psychological, yet the core concepts are applicable to the characters and situations of this study. For example, she states that syncope resembles sleep and death (253, 397), and this aspect is evident in nearly every genre of this study when characters confuse these states. This confusion provides glimpses of medieval medical practices of diagnosing death, including checking the

pulse or the temperature of the body. Misunderstandings also enhance the spectacle and pauses in narration, as characters mourn unnecessarily, reveal regrets, or try to act impulsively, such as the lion in Chrétien's *Chevalier au Lion* who wrongly assumes that Yvain is dead and tries to kill himself. Moreover, syncope can be a form of resistance or rebellion and a way to forget the world (Clément 361) because it very temporarily alleviates a burden (351). Many despairing characters faint after hearing a shocking revelation or losing a loved one, and a loss of consciousness often arises after stating that they can no longer cope. Syncope therefore momentarily interrupts their despair. Finally, syncope becomes a useful form of rebellion or resistance in two notable examples. Clément discusses resisting the normal functioning and order of the world and body (347, 398). Some characters in this study use syncope as a way to resist and rebel against the king. Fénice for example feigns death to be with her lover in *Cligès,* and Mordret feigns unconsciousness during his ruse to overthrow Arthur in the *Mort le roi Artu*.

It is evident that syncope has a broad signification and is a useful narrative tool for authors to pause narrative time and illustrate despair, love, loss, and resistance. In addition to creating a delay to emphasize emotions, the narration also begins to depend on a difference or disability that functions as a spectacle in the text. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder label this dependence a narrative prosthesis because it is a "crutch upon which literary narratives lean for their representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insight" (*Prosthesis* 49).[4] According to their study, the definition of disability is quite broad and is "what characterizes a body as deviant from shared norms of bodily appearance and ability" ("Prosthesis" 20). Syncope can therefore be considered a disability in the narration as the collapsed body distinguishes itself in appearance and ability from the other characters. Even though the disability may be

[4] I reference both Mitchell and Synder's book, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*, and Mitchell's book chapter (*Prosthesis*), "Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor" ("Prosthesis").

temporary, the fainted body creates a visible difference. Furthermore, narrative prosthesis "refers to the pervasiveness of disability as a device of characterization in narrative art" (*Prosthesis* 9). Syncope's frequent recurrence in imaginative literature of the High Middle Ages shows the motif to be much more than an arbitrary event, but a consistent narrative technique that allows the author to redirect the reader's attention to the character or theme that he or she wishes to emphasize.

Mitchell and Snyder's analysis provides valuable insight into this narrative technique, as syncope functions as a disability. Their research analyzes the depiction of people with disabilities in both literature and film, and provides both a literary and historical view that shows that "even after the professionalization of modern medicine, literature continues to serve an important explanatory function in the cultural understanding of disability" (*Prosthesis* 26). The relationship between medicine and literature was also important during the High Middle Ages, and as we will see in chapter two, imaginative literature had a significant influence on medical treatises concerning lovesickness, with fainting as a notable symptom. Mitchell and Snyder focus on texts from the sixteenth century forward, and notably the role of the physiognomic method from the eighteenth century that subjectively assumes that a person's external and disabled state mirrors the internal qualities, including moral integrity, courage, or sanity (*Prosthesis* 58). They argue that these assumptions have always been directed at people with disabilities (60). This is evident in the Old French literature of this study, as characters quickly make assumptions about the causes of syncope and attempt to interpret the internal reason for the spectacle; Lancelot in the *Lancelot en prose* is considered mad when he is actually in love, and the Saracens in the *Chanson d'Antioche* think the Christian army lacks the courage to attack when they are fainting due to hunger.

Since narratives develop "signs of cultural deviance into textually marked bodies" (Mitchell, *Prosthesis* 54), the narration begins to rely on these marked bodies to advance the story's plot ("Prosthesis" 20-22). This is much more than redirecting attention to a spectacle because a seemingly unimportant faint can be a critical turning point, and a method to paradoxically slow and propel the narration. When syncope pauses and slows the text to impose a greater focus on the fainted body, the text supplies details that introduce new characters and parallel plots, create links to other episodes, and support, advance, or further develop the narration. Characters are reunited, reveal their emotional attachment to another character, discover new information to continue their quests, and awaken to fight for revenge. Syncope enriches narration because certain events, characteristics, or behaviors are highlighted, interior emotions become more visible, suffering presents itself externally, illnesses become obvious, and love is no longer hidden. The disabled body, or in this case the fainted body, "becomes a paramount device of characterization" ("Prosthesis" 29). Due to the narrative technique of syncope, hagiographical texts show saints as crucial role models, the epics reveal the valiance and sacrificial loyalty of knights, the verse romances explain the overwhelming effects of lovesickness, and the prose romances contrast the knights' development as a worldly or spiritual knight.

In addition to disabilities and fainting functioning as a narrative prosthesis and a characterization device, authors also use the disabled body to give social critiques. Mitchell explains that disability can function as a "master metaphor for social ills; thus the characterization of disability provides a means through which literature performs its social critique while simultaneously sedimenting stigmatizing beliefs about people with disabilities" ("Prosthesis" 24). Diseased bodies, such as those with leprosy, are often treated as having a

moral difference because these diseases can be thought to reflect an inner state and externally reveal sin. Syncope also reveals a deeper moral aspect, as characters in the *Queste del Saint Graal* assume that Lancelot's loss of consciousness before the grail is due to his hidden sins. This form of syncope noticeably separates Lancelot from the grail and other knights because his sin keeps him from being in the presence of God. Additionally, Perceval's trance-like wandering in Chrétien's *Conte du Graal* and Yvain's trance-like madness in the *Chevalier au Lion* also reveal their sin.

The social stigma of syncope can apply to an individual or a group. For example, it is often assumed that women faint more frequently due to their emotional state. In Old French literature, women do lose consciousness due to extreme emotions such as fear, joy, sadness, or love, however as shown in this study's chosen texts, syncope is more common in men. Moreover, a man's loss of consciousness does not automatically imply weakness, shown by both Roland in the *Chanson de Roland* and Lancelot in the *Lancelot en prose* who faint repeatedly and are praised for their unrivaled knightly prowess. Gretchen Mieszkowski supports the notion that fainting is not unmanly, and notes, "by romance convention, it is the greatest warriors and the greatest lovers who faint" (50).[5] In the same way, feminine fainting does not always represent weakness, which is visible in the fainting and mourning of four thousand women in the *Roman de Thèbes* before they convince their king with their strength and perseverance to avenge their knights. It is therefore necessary to interpret the reason for a disability or instance of syncope, and literature uses the "bottomless interpretative possibilities" that disability provides (Mitchell, *Prosthesis* 61). Just as blindness "may represent the incapacity of humanity to see into

[5] In her article, "Revisiting Troilus' Faint," Mieszkowski gives numerous examples of fainting to prove that Troilus's faint does not render his character unmanly. She further states that it is wrong to use a modern critical approach and assume that Troilus is passive and weak only because he faints since what fainting represents in medieval literature and nineteenth century literature are different.

the future," and lameness can "designate the crippling effect of social ideologies" ("Prosthesis" 25), syncope also has a deeper signification. It is an outer manifestation of sin, and it can also symbolize a knight's strength or weakness, a person or group's inability to handle situations, a knight's failure to discern the difference between a spiritual or worldly quest, as in the *Queste del Saint Graal*, or a loss of power, as represented by Arthur in the *Mort Artu.*

Medieval Medicine

In order to analyze the overall importance of syncope in medieval literature, a solid understanding of medieval medicine and of the treatments for syncope is crucial since culture, ideologies, and literature are often intertwined. Medieval medicine is a vast field with a complex history, but practices generally relied and expounded on treatises by ancient philosophers and doctors such as Hippocrates, Dioscorides, and Galen. Monks and clergymen frequently functioned as doctors and used these treatises and their knowledge of herbs to heal (Wickersheimer 3). A scholar of Hippocrates, Galen believed that sickness was due to a humoral imbalance, and he introduced the idea of an active fight against disease, just as one would fight against a sin or sickness of the soul (Imbault-Huart 15-16). Interestingly, Galenists thought that the heart was the source of the vital spirits, and fainting occurs when the quantity of spirits is low and the remaining spirits in the body must rush to the heart to prevent death (Domecq 17). Beginning in the eleventh century, medieval medical practices and knowledge began to change in the West as doctors such as Constantine the African translated Arabic and Greek treatises into Latin (Imbault-Huart 9, 12), and medical schools and universities began to flourish in the twelfth century. The already established School of Salerno, for example, was prominent up until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when medical schools in Paris and Montpellier gradually took

its place (20). From the twelfth century onward, medicine shifted away from the clergy and monasteries due to a renewed focus on Aristotle, physics, astronomy, and physiology that conflicted with church doctrine (9), and the resulting church ordinances preventing monks from practicing medicine (Wickersheimer 6, 15). In the thirteenth century, autopsies became more common (Givens 151), and teaching of surgery was integrated with medical curriculum (Jones, *Medieval* 82). The fourteenth century then saw many changes to medical practice, including the authority to practice being reserved to those who passed an exam (Wickersheimer 12), but most notably due to the Black Plague. During this period there was an increase in the building of hospitals, and there were problems with isolation of the sick, sanitation, availability of medicine (Imbault-Huart 26-27, 30). Our analysis of medieval medicine will focus on the eleventh to fourteenth centuries due to the rise in popularity of medical treatises in the eleventh century that coincides with the first appearance of fainting in Old French literature, and the marked changes that the Black Plague caused in the fourteenth century. Additionally, the surgeon Guy de Chauliac wrote an important treatise on surgery in the fourteenth century that helps elucidate the earlier means of discerning between an unconscious and dead state. Since doctors and surgeons in the Middle Ages shared and adapted many ideas, treatments, and discoveries, this study examines common treatises from a variety of treatises and cultures.

In general, medical treatises provide guides for healthy living or list treatments for a variety of illnesses such as epilepsy, paralysis, fluid retention, hemorrhoids, and various wounds and pains. Syncope is listed as an illness on its own, but also as a symptom of different diseases. For instance, chapter two of this study explores fainting as a symptom of lovesickness as explored in Constantine's *Viaticum*. Doctors based the causes and treatments for various diseases and injuries on the idea of balance of the humors: blood, yellow bile, black bile or melancholy,

and phlegm. Hippocrates discussed these humors in the fifth century BC, and each humor is given a season and a degree. Blood is associated with spring and considered to be warm and moist, yellow bile with summer and thought to be warm and dry, the cold and dry black bile with autumn, and the cold and moist phlegm with winter (Jackson 7). Medical writers then built upon the knowledge of their predecessors using the theory of humors for treatment and diagnosis.

Avicenna's eleventh-century *Cantica Avicennae* lists different illnesses and symptoms that arise because of a prevalence of a certain humor, and Hildegard of Bingen's twelfth-century *Causae et curae* stresses the importance of balancing the humors. Hildegard says that the humors are put into movement by the moon whose movements change the behaviors of man (33, 69) while Raymon Llull in his thirteenth century *Liber principiorum medicinae* attributes the imbalance of the humors to original sin (35). Llull created a tree of principles and degrees of medicine in order to understand the relationship of the humors, degrees, elements, and natural, non-natural, and anti-natural foundations (10-11, 45). Medical writers commonly believed that the humors, elements, foundations, and the body were interconnected. For example, the elements join with the humors since yellow bile is hot from fire and dry from the earth, while blood is also hot from fire, but moist from the air. Phlegm is moist from the air, but becomes cold from water, just like melancholy is cold from water yet dry from the earth and is connected to yellow bile (Llull 221). Since everything is interdependent, it is necessary to keep a balance in order to avoid illness and disease. Llull explains that a doctor "doit savoir comment accroître, diminuer, équilibrer les degrés les uns avec les autres" and that "il faut qu'il sache distinguer, accorder et opposer les degrés entre eux, de telle manière que son œuvre artificielle et l'œuvre naturelle s'associent et s'accordent pour conserver la santé et détruire la maladie" (54).

Diets, medicine, or purging by bleeding or vomiting were used to maintain a balance in the humors. This balance is especially important in order to treat or cure syncope, which is usually listed as a disease caused by the melancholic humor. Therefore, many treatments resemble those for epilepsy, " le mal dont on tombe" (Platearius, Trans. Malandin 88). Many of the treatises, such as *Le Régime du corps* by Aldebrandin de Sienne, also mention directions for purging. In this daily guide to healthy living, Aldebrandin states that vomiting is useful in order to "purgier l'estomach des malvaises humeurs, et le tieste, et apriès le cors" and is "boine medecine…à chiaus ki tanblent" (56). [6] Moreover, bleeding was a common practice, but Hildegard of Bingen warns that improper bleeding could cause more harm than good. In the *Causae et curae* she writes, "une saignée pratiquée au-delà de la mesure affaiblit le corps, tout comme une inondation due à la pluie qui tombe sans mesure sur la terre lui fait du mal [mais] une saignée qui se fait selon une juste mesure enlève les humeurs mauvaises et soigne le corps" (142). Bleeding performed properly restores the humors, but a large blood loss leads to a greater humoral imbalance and death. This is evident in medieval French literature, as bleeding battle wounds result in death, or even as Perceval's sister in the *Queste del Saint Graal* faints and then dies after sacrificially giving her blood to a leper.

In addition to different forms of purging, the use of medicine was a remedy for syncope. These treatments are most commonly found in the herbals and other related treatises, such as Platearius's *Circa instans* from the twelfth century, which was translated as the *Livre des simples médecines* in the thirteenth century. In this very popular manuscript, Platearius explains that there are simple medicines produced by nature, and composed medicines made of a mixture of medicines. He believes that composed medicines are necessary when "il y a des maladies si

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[6] Aldobrandino da Siena, a native Italian, wrote the *Régime du corps* in French in 1256.

fortes et si enracinées que jamais elles ne seront guéries par des médecines simples" (Trans. Malandin 8). He lists information about each medicine, most importantly if it is hot, cold, moist, or dry. Platearius includes many herbs that are able to cure syncope such as borage, which is a common herb that is hot and moist to the first degree (18). With the knowledge that humors and elements must be balanced, and that the cold and dry melancholic humor often causes syncope, the hot and moist borage is a logical choice for treating syncope. Making a juice of borage and adding sugar, as Platearius suggests, implies that this simple medicine can be used to treat fainting. On the other hand, Platearius also lists senna as a hot and dry herb that should be cooked and added to borage juice with sugar in order to cure fainting (Trans. Malandin 88). This composed medicine, which he believes to be a better remedy, implies that syncope can be a more complex illness.

The *Circa instans* lists numerous other remedies for fainting, including dried sugared rose petals mixed with rose water for those who faint consecutively (Trans. Malandin 100), rosemary mixed with wine (108), rose water mixed with basil (130), an aloe sirop (139), gold (140), nard water mixed with wine (154), and cooked lemon balm when fainting is caused by cold (162). The flower of cuscuta epithymum can be used to both purge the melancholic humor and stop fainting (172), while jasmine comforts the organs of the chest (180), and myrobolans cure fainting and clarify the sight that is clouded by the melancholic humor (242). Other remedies for fainting come from the powdered root of zedoary (202), ginger (202), musk (222), euphorbium (226), clove powder mixed with borage juice (232), galangal mixed with borage juice (234), Chinese cinnamon (240), ceruse or white lead (246), myrtle (254), honey (259), and *os de cœur de cerf* (264). Interestingly, uterine suffocation was also commonly thought to cause fainting, as mentioned in the *Trotula* texts from the twelfth century. The *Circa instans* offers

several remedies for uterine suffocation, such as cloves, vapors of aloe, and vapors of laudanum for women who appear dead and have fainted (243).

The *Circa instans* is one of many medical treatises that lists potential cures for syncope and other diseases. The *Tacuinum sanitatis,* for example, is an eleventh-century daily guide for healthy living that lists what is necessary for health, including sleep, regulating the humors and emotions, and the proper use of food and drinks.[7] The *Tacuinum* mentions that salted fish should be avoided because it liquefies the humors and causes collapses (Arano 109). In addition, it explains that sour apples can be useful to treat fainting (133). At first glance, this may appear to be a bizarre remedy, but sour apples are listed as cold and humid in the second degree, and according to Avicenna, warm and dry yellow bile causes fainting (*Cantica* v.1204), Sour apples can therefore be an effective cure for an imbalance of the humors. The *Tacuinum sanitatis* provides numerous illuminations representing seasons, herbs, and daily life, and an illuminator of the Paris manuscript appears to be the same as a *Lancelot* manuscript (Arano 28-29). This connection adds more courtly imagery to the *Tacuinum*, but also shows the relationship between medieval medicine and imaginative literature.

Medical treatises offer much more than a list of interesting facts, and clearly influenced literature during the High Middle Ages as references to wounds, disease, doctors, and treatment abound. For example, the prevalent belief that Jesus is the doctor of the body as well as the soul (Imbault-Huart 162) is visible in the important role of the clergy and monks as early physicians. In the *Lancelot en prose*, and specifically the *Queste del Saint Graal*, for example Lancelot commonly receives physical healing from hermits who also guide his spiritual healing. Texts

[7] Originally an Arabic manuscript attributed to Ibn Botlan, the *Tacuinum* was translated to Latin in the eleventh century (Arano 11).

associate the spiritual and physical, and the healing of the soul is more or equally as important as healing the body (Givens 17).

The literary texts of this study do not allude to specific medical treatises or doctors, but help elucidate the relationship of literature and the medical culture due to the common mention of the city of Salerno, herbs for healing, and key symptoms to distinguish between a fainted and dead state. Chrétien de Troyes's romance *Cligès* mentions well-educated doctors arriving from Salerno, and his *Conte du Graal* notes Gauvain's medical knowledge of herbs. Herbal remedies are also frequent in Marie de France's *Lais*, and most notably in *Eliduc* in which a magical flower awakens the fainted Guilliadon. Using the pulse to distinguish between a fainted and dead state becomes common in twelfth-century literature, and Hildegard of Bingen explains that the pulse can indicate whether or not a person will recover from an illness (*Causae et curae* 8, 246-247). In the *Roman de Thèbes*, bystanders notice the fainted Ismène's pulse, and similar instances occur in Chrétien de Troyes' *Cligès* as well as the *Queste del Saint Graal,* in which men know to check Lancelot's pulse to determine if he is alive after he fainted before the grail. Research of medical treatises shows how the increased mention of syncope in the literary texts mirrors the increasing popularity of medical treatises during the High Middle Ages. From the earlier epics to the prose romances, it is evident that there is an increase in the mention of medical practices and trained physicians. As fainting becomes more and more common in numerous characters, the descriptions of remedies and of the emotions of the fainted character also become more complex.

Chapter Organization

Syncope becomes increasingly prominent in literature, and examples from the Matters of France, Rome, and Britain[8] illustrate how descriptions of a character's physical or emotional state become more elaborate in the High Middle Ages. In the eleventh-century epics, fainting is commonly a stated action and reaction with occasional details of a character's fading sight and paleness. Descriptions remain concise, as poetry is more dense and compact due to syllabic verse and rime scheme. The descriptions in the verse romances of the twelfth century also remain concise, yet the central theme shifts from feudal loyalty and sacrifice to love, allowing an even greater focus on emotions. As the *Lancelot en prose* demonstrates, prose romances in the thirteenth century became standard for imaginative literature and provide opportunities for longer descriptions and more instances of syncope as they take "full advantage of the freedoms of the novelistic form in terms of description, character development, dialogue, and emotional and psychological depth" (Jewers 56). While the eleventh-century *Chanson de Roland* shows Aude's love for Roland as she faints dead at Charlemagne's feet, the twelfth-century verse *Roman d'Enéas* explains Didon's love in a monologue and as she moans, cries, sweats, faints, and cannot sleep. Moreover, Chrétien de Troyes narrates Lancelot's deep love for Guinevere by causing him to constantly enter love trances, while the *Lancelot en prose* explains Lancelot's love with his trance-like states, and provides more elaborate descriptions of his continual wandering and other characters' assumptions that he is mad. From the epics to the verse and prose romances, texts increase characterization and descriptions of emotions or sickness, enhance reactions to a fainted body, and as a result, offer more verisimilitude. As we examine

[8] Jean Bodel was the first to list these three different genres in his twelfth-century *Chanson des saisnes* (Jewers 47; Bodel v. 6-11). While these are not the only examples, the Matter of France contains epic *chansons de geste*, the Matter of Rome focuses on the *romans d'antiquité* based on classical antiquity, and the Matter of Britain contains the Arthurian tales.

numerous examples from literature of the High Middle Ages, it is interesting to note how the narrative forms of the epics, verse, and prose romances allow the authors to provide varied and more elaborate depictions of physical and emotional states.

Chapter One: Distressing Faints in Hagiography and the Epics

While syncope is found in many texts, this study focuses on examples from texts that effectively illustrate the broad use of fainting throughout the High Middle Ages. In the first chapter *La Vie de saint Alexis* offers an example of the earliest appearances of fainting in literature with the use of the verb "pasmer." This hagiographical text introduces fainting due to overwhelming emotions after the loss of a loved one, while also illustrating how the pause in narration created by syncope allows interjections and advice from other characters. After Alexis's death, the pope interrupts the scene of mourning to declare that instead of despairing, the family should rejoice in the hope after death. Another hagiographical text, *La Vie de saint Gilles*, mimics the same function of syncope in the *planctus*, or deep mourning scenes, and extends the paradigm to include a group of forty-eight monks that faint in unison. Both hagiographical examples present fainting as an outward sign of intense emotions and highlight the importance of the saint to the other characters.

Chapter one also examines the dramatic fainting scenes in several epics, including the *Chanson de Roland, La Chanson d'Antioche, Le Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange,* and *La Chanson de Girart de Roussillon.* In the masculine world of epic poetry, syncope is often related to injury and death on the battlefield, and a loss of consciousness shows the prowess of the knights, their unwavering devotion despite suffering and injury, and the importance of their character to the rest of the story. Like the hagiographical texts, the *Chanson de Roland* often uses fainting as an

element of the *planctus* in order to demonstrate deep suffering. As is common in the epics, when the valiant Roland continually loses consciousness before his death, his comrades show their great distress by fainting, which is illustrated by the collapse of thousands of soldiers. However, the distress acts as a narrative prosthesis that leads to the Christian army's victory, and Roland's repeated collapses before his death highlight his distinguished masculine character and his faithfulness to the feudal code. Moreover, a comparison of fainting and the portrayal of emotion between two opposing groups in battle, such as the Christians and the Saracens, elucidates the role of syncope in each group. As the narration alternates between the two groups, highlighting similarities and differences, Rick Altman's dual-focus theory explains this type of narration and is useful when studying epics like the *Chanson de Roland*. Altman's theory helps analyze each side and the use of transitions between the two, and reveals fainting's role as a boundary marker.[9]

Similar to *Roland*, the *Chanson d'Antioche* distinguishes between the Christians and Saracens by highlighting the fainting of the two groups, and depicts the perseverance of the Christian army in the midst of suffering and famine. As opposed to the *Chanson de Roland*, syncope is characteristic of the Saracen army in order to highlight despair and hopelessness in the face of defeat. Continuing with the *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange*, instances of syncope arise due to emotions such as fear and sadness. Modeling the narrative functions of fainting in *Roland*, this epic depicts the story of the valiant and perseverant Vivien who loses consciousness multiple times due to his injuries in battle. During the pauses in battle, fainting creates an important confessional space before death. While many sections of the *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange* do

[9] In his *Theory of Narrative*, Rick Altman describes three different narrative styles: single focus, dual focus, and multi focus. The dual-focus theory describes the different following units, metaphors, transitions, and "rules" used in a text where there are two groups performing similar activities. In epic battles, for example, one group acts and the other responds. This theory will be explored more fully in chapter one.

not contain instances of syncope, sections such as the *Chevalerie Vivien* and *Aliscans* illustrate how an author uses the motif of fainting to emphasize emotions and connect them with the physical strength or weakness of the characters.

Finally, in addition to masculine battlefield fainting in the *Chanson de Roland*, the use of syncope for hyperbolic effect in the *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange*, or more realistic collapses due to famine in the *Chanson d'Antioche*, this chapter also examines the use of feminine fainting in the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*. The protagonist's wife, Berthe, is the character that most commonly loses consciousness, and these instances emphasize her pivotal role in the text that aids in Girart's transformation. This text serves as an interesting transition between hagiography, the epics, and the verse romances where feminine fainting becomes more common and emotions are more prominent than heroic feats in battle.

Chapter Two: From Distress to Love: Emotional Syncope in the Twelfth-Century Verse Romances

While drawing on examples from hagiography and the epics, chapter two analyzes the changing paradigm of syncope by studying verse narratives of the twelfth century. As love and diverse emotions become prominent in the medieval romances, lovers' swoons and emotional faints abound in both men and women. Works based on classical antiquity, specifically the *Roman de Thèbes* and the *Roman d'Enéas*, serve as a bridge between the *chansons de geste* and courtly literature. There is a larger focus on female characters, and the verse becomes more detailed, especially in its amplification of classical stories to emphasize emotions such as love. In the *Roman de Thèbes*, epic elements of syncope remain, such as the emphasis on feudal loyalty, distress after loss in battle, and the fainting of groups of people, but there is a marked shift to

show the futility of battle and importance of devotion in love. Isiphile's faint and helplessness after losing a baby boy introduces the knights' service to a lady in need, while the loss of consciousness of both Atys and Ismène details fainting as a sign of love. Continuing with the principal theme of love, *Pyrame et Thisbé* adapts the classic Ovidian tale and expands the paradigm of syncope. Emphasizing lovesickness's devastating effects, these young lovers are unable to cope with the symptoms. In the *Roman d'Enéas* fainting is a clear marker between mutual love and rash, extreme love since a loss of consciousness is a sign and a symptom of lovesickness. Enéas does not reciprocate Didon's extreme love, and as a result she loses her ability to govern her emotions and her land. On the other hand, Lavine receives an education in love, learns to control her emotions, and receives healing. It becomes clear that the overwhelming passion of love presents itself externally and characters interpret the signs differently, either as an unknown sickness or as love for another.

Continuing with the greater role of female characters and the prominence of the emotion of love, chapter two concludes with the *Lais* of Marie de France. Theses short narrative poems show an increased awareness of the medical culture of the twelfth century with the mention of the treatment of bleeding in *Equitan*, a female medical doctor from Salerno in the *Dous Amanz*, and several references to herbal healing. Fainting from a shocking revelation is a common element of the paradigm, but *Fraisne* introduces fainting from a joyful revelation, and the loss of consciousness reveals a long-kept secret. In the *Lais*, syncope occurs most frequently due to loss and reveals suffering due to love. Moreover, trances mimicking a loss of consciousness become a more important symptom of lovesickness and later become central to the Arthurian tales. For example, in *Chaitivel* the lady exists in a pensive, depressive state after losing three lovers, and in *Guigemar* the young lady remains lost in thought until reconciled with her lover Guigemar.

Most notably in *Lanval*, the protagonist is in a trance after violating his lady's request to keep their love a secret. Lanval's lovesickness and obedience to his lady resemble the courtly love of Lancelot in Chrétien de Troyes's romance and the *Lancelot en prose*.

Eliduc is a critical story in the analysis of the paradigm of syncope because the continual mention of the unconscious Guilliadon drives the narration and allows an analysis of the means of verifying a fainted or dead state, as well as herbal healing with a magical flower. This tale also extends the discussion of courtly love, as Guilliadon originally faints because she is shocked to learn of her unknown adulterous love. Concluding chapter two with *Yonec*, a tale that illustrates fainting due to diverse reasons, demonstrates a loss of consciousness as a means to a goal when the young lady feigns fainting in order to be with her lover and escape her husband. The themes and functions of the motif of fainting that are present in the adaptations of classical works and that Marie uses in her *Lais* continue to develop in Chrétien de Troyes's verse romances, most notably the symptoms of lovesickness and the tension that courtly love creates.

Chapter Three: Fainting and Trances in Chrétien de Troyes's Romances

The third chapter of this study explores the numerous instances of syncope in Chrétien de Troyes's verse romances. Throughout his romances fainting becomes an essential element of the *conjointure* that he uses to conjoin episodes and themes, and shows the transformation of characters either in love relationships or personal development. Beginning with *Erec et Enide*, a loss of consciousness is an interesting aspect of battle strategies, as being unhorsed due to fainting is a sure sign of defeat. In all of Chrétien's works, and especially in this first romance, a character's regaining consciousness can be both literal and metaphorical, as described by Donald Maddox in his analysis of Chrétien de Troyes. He explains that a "crisis of awakening" (37)

propels the narration, and this is evident first when Erec realizes his *recreantise* and later when he awakens to reconcile with Enide. In *Erec et Enide*, Chrétien also shows his art of narration with an actual syncope of his own words when he cuts his narration short by stating he will not provide extra details, or as he uses the *brisure du couplet* to emphasize rime scheme, and consequently instances of fainting.

Chrétien's second romance, *Cligès*, uses syncope in multiple ways to illustrate lovesickness, first with Alexandre and Soredamor, and then with their son, Cligès, and his love, Fénice. Appearance versus reality becomes an important motif, and instances of trances and fainting create deception and conceal or reveal love. This romance introduces a trance-like fixation on an object when Alexandre stares at a shirt made by his love, Soredamor, and Chrétien seems to mock discretion in love, as characters have difficulty discerning the real reason for a character's loss of consciousness or trance. *Cligès* also provides a striking example of using syncope as a means to a goal when Fénice and Cligès develop an elaborate scheme to escape Alis and be together. In this scene, references to medicine and treatments abound and syncope is critical to understanding the couple's relationship and love.

The *Chevalier au Lion* then focuses more on courtly love as Yvain strives to serve his lady. Firstly, the spectacle of distress and fainting's role of redirecting attention play an important role in the narration and cause Yvain to fall in love. Continued instances of syncope occur due to his broken oath to his lady Laudine and his desire to reconcile their relationship. Moreover, this romance introduces sin as the cause of a trance-like state of madness when Yvain is found unconscious in the forest. However, this sin is distinct from the other instances in the romances because the sin is a violation of the courtly code instead of a violation of God's laws, as in the other Arthurian tales. Finally, the *Chevalier au Lion* underlines Arthur's absence from

court. Syncope is critical to understanding the motif of his absence in Chrétien's works and in the *Lancelot en prose.*

While courtly love is visible in the *Chevalier au Lion*, the *Chevalier de la Charrette* depicts Lancelot as the quintessential courtly knight who receives his identity in love. Syncope is evident mainly in the form of trances, as Lancelot is the pensive, lovesick knight that almost falls out a window and wanders into the water. His fascination with Guinevere's comb shows his overwhelming, consuming love as well as his devotion to his lady that turns to idolatry. For both Guinevere and Lancelot, fainting reveals true emotions that the lovers must struggle to keep hidden.

Finally, in the *Conte du Graal*, Chrétien's final and unfinished romance, syncope is central to Perceval's transformation from an innocent boy in the forest to a knight that is spiritually aware. His mother's faint at the beginning of the romance continually reminds him of his past and becomes a key element in his silence before the grail. His trances illustrate his identity as a courtly knight, as well as his unmindfulness of both important advice and sin. As his knightly quest turns spiritual, Perceval awakens from a trance-like absence to comprehend his sin, reject his old identity, and embrace the new. Chrétien's five romances are precursors to the prose romances of the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle* and allow for a comparison between the narrative styles of Arthurian literature in verse and prose. As Chrétien de Troyes shows, syncope is an appealing paradigm as the dramatic and narrative purposes allow authors to illustrate the inner emotions and thoughts of characters, and punctuate the narrative with shifts and transitions.

Chapter Four: The Rise and Fall of Lancelot in the *Lancelot en prose*

The fourth and final chapter of this study examines the thirteenth-century *Lancelot en prose* that includes *Lancelot du Lac*, *Queste del Saint Graal*, and the *Mort le roi Artu*. These three prose romances contain numerous examples of syncope in both men and women, and elaborate descriptions of these instances provide the reader with a clear image of the characters' emotions and thoughts. For example, in the *Lancelot du Lac* alone, Lancelot regrets attacking a knight, Claudas feels shame for repeatedly losing consciousness, Lady Roestoc feels rejection when Gauvain shuns her, Arthur has intense guilt for not helping his vassal Ban, Agravain is joyful to reunite with his brother, and Guinevere's heart breaks as Lancelot loses his senses. In addition to revealing emotions, syncope is an important element of characterization. Instances reveal Gauvain's reputation and past, while also showing his weakening character due to multiple injuries. Arthur also appears as the weaker, absent king whose multiple trances show his guilt, indecisiveness, and pride. The *Lancelot du Lac* also uses syncope to explain Lancelot's development from a child to a courageous knight and a devoted lover. However these same instances render it difficult to keep his identity and his adulterous love a secret. Similar to Chrétien de Troyes's romance, Lancelot constantly enters trances thinking about his love, and as a result, gets stuck under his horse, almost drowns, and loses his senses. Throughout the *Lancelot du Lac*, syncope continually redirects the narration to the important themes of identity and love.

However, Lancelot's identity as the perfect courtly knight becomes problematic in the *Queste del Saint Graal*, and just as trances prove Lancelot's prowess and devotion, they now reveal his sin that hinders his grail quest. Instances of fainting or trances unveil sins that keep characters from their quest, such as Mélyant's greed, Lionel's anger, or Lancelot's adulterous

love. The author uses the paradigm of syncope to illustrate the difference between the worldly and spiritual quests, as well as the opportunity for forgiveness.

The *Mort Artu* concludes the vast *Vulgate Cycle* and this study on syncope in the High Middle Ages. As opposed to the hope that ends the spiritual *Queste del Saint Graal*, the *Mort Artu* highlights the destruction of Arthur's kingdom and despair that results. Syncope emphasizes Lancelot's *fol amor* and declining prowess, Gauvain's desire for revenge, and Arthur's realization of his wife's unfaithfulness, his despair of losing his great knights, and his downfall. A new addition to the paradigm occurs when Mordret, in an effort to seize Arthur's kingdom, writes a fake letter and feigns fainting in order to manipulate the emotions of the other characters. While his ruse originally succeeds, this event is a turning point in the romance and fainting emphasizes the rapid destruction of Arthur's court. Many instances of syncope follow the traditional uses of the paradigm, yet the trances and faints accentuate the somber tone of the romance, until the very end when the author uses the motif to once again note Lancelot's repentance and the importance of his character to the work as a whole.

Throughout these four chapters and from hagiography to the prose romances, my goal is to illustrate the evolving role of syncope in medieval French literature and to show how this coincides with the changes in the genres. Syncope is much more than a dramatic spectacle, and is a useful narrative tool that authors use to redirect the reader's attention to important characters, themes, and events. Analyzing the diverse causes and representations of syncope in the texts unveils many different narrative functions in addition to elucidating the role of medieval medicine and culture in literature.

Chapter One: Distressing Faints in Hagiography and Epics

Beginning this analysis with the earliest appearance of syncope in Old French literature allows a clear understanding of the developing paradigm in the High Middle Ages. As instances of the motif of fainting become more prevalent, complex, and varied, the first use of the verb "pasmer" in the *Vie de saint Alexis* serves as a point of reference for other losses of consciousness due to overwhelming emotions. In the same way, this first chapter explores the *Vie de saint Gilles* and diverse epics, including the *Chanson de Roland, La Chanson d'Antioche, Le Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange,* and *La Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*, that use syncope to portray physical pain and various emotional states. One of the critical narrative functions of syncope throughout Old French literature is its ability to externally depict an inner emotional state, and this is first evident in hagiography and the epics. Fainting is an essential element of mourning scenes and dramatically illustrates reactions to shocking news. It also reveals strengths and weaknesses of characters, emphasizes the ideology of the feudal code, serves as a boundary marker between characters and groups, and provides an effective transition in the narration from one scene to the next. Furthermore, as described in the introduction of this study, the notion of syncope creating a delay in the narrative time, and functioning as a narrative prosthesis to paradoxically slow and propel the text, is evident from these early texts. In hagiography, instances of fainting lead to a change in mindset from mourning to hope, and in the epics, instances lead to revenge, victory, and the transformation of important characters.

While one of the earliest of appearances of syncope in Old French literature occurs in the *Vie de saint Alexis*, the motif of fainting is not new. Classical sources, notably, Seneca, Vergil, and Catullus also describe the effects of fainting due to intense emotions.[10] The instances are not

[10] Other brief examples are visible in book three of Lucretius's *De rerum natura* (v. 154-58), Donatus's *Life of Vergil* (32), book 37 of Livy's *History of Rome* (chapter 53 section 10), and Ovid's *Amores* (3.5). A special

extensive, but the most notable examples occur due to overwhelming love, causing the characters to become pale and collapse. In Seneca's "Phaedra," Phaedra's hopeless love for Hippolytus causes her to lose consciousness, "Her lifeless frame drops suddenly to the ground. / A death-pallor has enveloped her face" (Boyle v. 585-86),[11] and when she awakens she states, "Who brings back the pain and restores my mind's / Oppressive heat? Oblivion was bliss!" (Boyle v. 589-90).[12] Seneca briefly describes Phaedra's fading color and the collapse to the ground and then the regaining of her senses. Similar to the instances of fainting in Old French literature, her loss of consciousness temporarily relieves her suffering, but then Hippolytus must discern the reason for Phaedra's collapse when she awakens.

Catullus speaks of love's effects on the body in poem 51 where he states that when he looks at his love, he loses his voice, his ears ring, and his eyes become dark.[13] Vergil's *Aeneid* also describes Dido's loss of consciousness due to lovesickness when Aeneas leaves her.[14] Fainting as a symptom of lovesickness will be discussed in further detail in the second chapter of this study, but these examples show fainting as an important narrative tool for Classical poets to illustrate emotional distress. Moreover, the concise descriptions of fading vision and collapsing resemble the descriptions found in the early instances in Old French literature. The twelfth-century poets will then amplify these examples and develop them into increasingly descriptive verse romances in order to adequately convey a character's inner state.

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[11] terrae repente corpus exanimum accidit / et ora morti similis obduxit color (v. 585-86).

[12] Quis me dolori reddit atque aestus graues / reponit animo? quam bene excideram mihi! (v. 589-90).

[13] " nothing is / left of me, each time / I see her, / …tongue numbed; arms, legs / melting, on fire; drum / drumming in ears; head- / lights gone black" (Whigham 110 v.6-12).
nam simul te, / Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi / vocis in ore, / lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus / flamma demanat, sonitu suopte / tintinant aures, gemina teguntur / lumina nocte (Garrison 35 v. 6-12).

[14] Vergil's *Aeneid*. Book four verse 393.

La Vie de saint Alexis

The *Vie de saint Alexis* is an important opening for this study on the evolving paradigm of syncope, not only because it offers the first example of "pasmer" in Old French literature,[15] but also because the different manuscripts of this hagiographical text ranging from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries contain different fainting episodes. The oldest eleventh-century poem contains one loss of consciousness, while a later thirteenth-century version describes three collapses. These few instances illustrate how the paradigm changes throughout the High Middle Ages, as the emphasis on emotions becomes greater, causing subsequent authors to choose to employ the motif of fainting to a greater extent. Therefore the development that we will see throughout Old French literature becomes evident within this single work.

In his analysis of the *Vie de saint Alexis*, Gaston Paris concludes that the original manuscript of this text dates from the eleventh century (45), with language dating before the *Chanson de Roland* (29). While the original is unfortunately no longer available, Paris notes the many similarities that the twelfth-century Hildesheim manuscript contains, thus providing readers an accurate depiction of the original eleventh-century text (24). In this hagiographical tale, the author presents the well-known legend of the fifth-century saint Alexis, who leaves his family and fiancée on his wedding night in order to live a life devoted to God. After seventeen years, Alexis returns to Rome and lives unrecognized under the stairs in his parent's home. When he dies, the family finds a letter describing his life of poverty and meekness, and as a result, the revelation that their long-lost pious son was living under their stairs for the past seventeen years understandably provokes intense suffering in the father, mother, and fiancée. This intense suffering provides the only instance of fainting in the eleventh-century manuscript, as the mother hears her husband's mourning, sees her deceased son, and falls to the floor fainted,

[15] "pamer." *Grand dictionnaire étymologique & historique du français*. 2005.

"Veit mort son fil, a terre chiet pasmede" (v. 425; Paris 160).[16] The father's emotions are clear from his body language of beating his chest, pulling his hair, and scratching his face, but the mother's loss of consciousness dramatically conveys the overwhelming emotions that her body cannot resist.[17] The visually descriptive scene allows the reader to empathize with the mother's grief. There is no specific mention of the mother regaining consciousness, but as she continues to lament she states, "Co'st grant merveile que li miens cors tant duret" (v. 455). Emphasizing the depth of her distress, fainting is a sign of the weakening body, and regaining consciousness shows the body's recovery from the emotions.

Throughout the chosen texts of this study, the motif of fainting is often present in scenes of mourning mothers to expose distress and despair. In the *Vie de saint Alexis*, the mother's collapse also begins a *planctus* that further emphasizes distress and highlights the distinguished character of the saint. A *planctus* can be a lyrical or narrative passage that expresses intense mourning in the presence of the deceased (Zumthor, "Planctus" 62). While Zumthor specifically relates the *planctus* to the *chansons de geste*, Zaal compares these scenes of mourning in hagiography and the epics, and notes the essential elements: seeing the deceased, an announcement of the *planctus*, an apostrophe to the dead, prayer for his or her soul, and signs of external and internal suffering (Zaal 140-141).[18] The *Vie de saint Alexis* contains these aspects and expresses the distress of the father, mother, and fiancée as they try to cope with the fact that they did not realize he was living with them, and wonder why he never identified himself.

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[16] I use Gaston Paris's edition for all references to *Alexis*. Since he includes many different *Alexis* manuscripts, the page number from Paris's book is also included for the first reference.

[17] Interestingly, the father's *planctus* expresses his "regret that his son had not followed the family tradition of chivalric service." (Elliott 48).

[18] Zaal analyzes the *Vie de saint Alexis* and the *Chanson de Roland* by listing parallel elements in both texts to confirm that the *chansons de saints* and the *chansons de geste* use the same literary technique of the *planctus* (143,152). This study examines this further in the section on the *Chanson de Roland*.

Similar to scratching the face or pulling a beard, fainting is a dramatic and often hyperbolic external sign of internal suffering (Zaal 141). While a *planctus* presents suffering, it also allows a greater presentation of the deceased character, as the mourners praise the life and sacrifices of Alexis and his devotion to God. Alexis serves as a saintly role model, and the reader understands Alexis's importance to his family and to the community. Much more than a spectacle illustrating distress, the *planctus* also fulfills an important narrative function in the text. During the delay created by lamentation and unconsciousness, the poet inserts a moral lesson given to the characters, and consequently to the reader, when the pope interjects to say that the extreme distress is not appropriate. Others may lament, but they should rejoice because they are in the presence of a saint who offers help and who portrayed a life committed to Christ.

> Seinors, que faites?' ço dist li apostolies,
> 'Que valt cist criz, cist dols ne cesta noise?
> Cui que seit dols, a nostre os est il ġoie;
> Quer par cestui avrons bone adjutorie.
> Si le preions que de toz mals nos tolget' (v. 501-505).

The pope's interruption implies that Christians should not act hopeless, as displayed by the hyperbolic external signs of inner distress. Instead, the pope offers a perspective that allows the mourners to look beyond their momentary sorrow.

In the stanza after the pope's statement, the tears and sorrow have ended, and the characters are singing and carrying the body of Alexis for burial. This scene is an important episode in the *Vie de saint Alexis* as the family lamenting the worldly loss of their son gains a more heavenly mindset, as Alexis once did when he left his family to follow God. The characters now focus not on their loss, but on the joy and grace found in God. Distress and joy are

juxtaposed and the poet gives a final reminder that if sins blind people, the life of saint Alexis offers an example of the right way to live (v. 618-620). Syncope thus allows the reader to clearly understand the differences between the two behaviors that the poet mentions, and is a turning point in the text both in the emotions it expresses and how we are supposed to interpret them. The mother's faint is an essential and recognizable element of the *planctus*, but it is also a crucial narrative device highlighting Alexis and the pope's message.

While the Hildesheim manuscript, modeling the original eleventh-century text, contains this one instance of fainting, subsequent versions of the legend also use fainting to illustrate the extreme distress of the family. Interestingly, the S manuscript (BNF Paris 12471) from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries[19], uses "pasmer" twice for the mother and once for the rejected fiancée. This manuscript increases details surrounding the mother and Alexis's fiancée, and focuses more on character development (Elliott 30).[20] Gaston Paris explains that the amplifications of the S manuscript show that poems were not adapted for the sole purpose of updating the language, but for the "simple désir d'embellir un poème, de le rendre plus long et plus intéressant, le fît refondre par le poète entre les mains duquel il tombait" (200). This citation elucidates how poets adapt certain tales to the interests of their audiences, and the amplification of texts becomes an important element in the twelfth-century *romans d'antiquité*. The intentional use of the motif of fainting also shows the poet's desire to focus on emotions. Alison Goddard Elliott notes that the "S [manuscript] reflects twelfth-century concerns: an increased interest in love and in women; a greater awareness of psychological nuance; a heightened sensitivity to the

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[19] Gaston Paris states that the manuscript appeared as early as the twelfth century (199), but this "rédaction interpolée" is in reality a composition of two manuscripts compiled in the thirteenth century (207).

[20] Additional amplifications to the original text include fuller descriptions of parties, a greater focus on Alexis's fiancée, and longer discourses from Alexis (Paris 203).

problems of conscience and individual responsibility" (76). As the poet of the S manuscript shows, syncope highlights the women's emotional states.

The first instance of fainting in the S manuscript occurs when the mother learns that Alexis has left his fiancée on their wedding night, and a shocking revelation causes her to faint, "Tel duel en ot, a poi ne ciet pasmée,/ Quant par le main le relieve li pére./ De la douleur s'asist li mére a tere/ Ne s'assist mie ne sour banc ne sour sele" (v. 420-423; Paris 233). The poet also provides details surrounding the mother's regaining consciousness as the father helps her off the floor. While the mother and rejected fiancée sit crying together, the father immediately acts to search for his son, and the scene remains focused on the women's distress, specifically that of the mother. Elliott explains that the "S-poet has also expanded the mother's role, seemingly in response to a desire for social and psychological verisimilitude… The depiction of her is romanticized, as she faints with grief " (40). The mother's greater expression of emotion follows the increase in instances of fainting seen as the *roman* evolves, and the reader is better able to sympathize with the characters, as in this scene. The reader sees the mother's helplessness, as she does not know what will become of her son, and her loss of consciousness illustrates her worry and distress.

The next two instances of fainting in the S manuscript occur when the fiancée and the mother learn what has happened to Alexis. Elliott says that important amplifications providing details surrounding Alexis's death make the text more appealing to readers who can identity with the emotions. For example, instead of the reader thinking that Alexis lived under his parents stairs for seventeen years without the other characters asking questions, the S manuscript presents the questions that the parents ask about the mysterious saint's identity, as well as Alexis asking for his family's forgiveness for causing them pain when he left (Elliott 40). Furthermore,

the mysterious letter found after Alexis's death flies into the hands of his fiancée so that she receives the news before the pope or the parents, highlighting the love that she and Alexis shared. Like the mother after her son's death, the S poet illustrates realistically the fiancée's distress as she falls to the ground fainted, "Grans fu li diex, a terre ciet pasmée" (v. 1142). Missing in the Hildesheim manuscript, the reader sees and understands the fiancée's distress after losing her love. The conclusion of the text then mirrors the Hildesheim version as the parents grieve, the mother loses consciousness,[21] and the pope interjects to state that their despair is not appropriate. The narrative functions of fainting remain the same in the S manuscript, but the greater frequency redirects the reader's attention to the importance of emotions and further develops the role of the women characters. Gaston Paris notes that it is striking that the S poet did not amplify the scenes of mourning at the end of the text, but concludes that the original poet "avait précisément développé cet endroit du récit avec une ampleur inusitée et un grand succès, et l'auteur de *i* [le manuscrit original] était assez poète pour reconnaître qu'il ne pouvait guère améliorer ce beau morceau" (207). The first use of "pasmer" in the original *Alexis* manuscript is therefore an early example of an expression of emotions that the later twelfth-century poets would employ.[22]

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[21] "Voit mort son fil: a terre ciet pasmée" (v. 1190).

[22] Another *Alexis* manuscript from the thirteenth century also employs the motif of fainting in order to relate the characters' emotions, yet the character of Alexis more closely resembles "the typical saint of the Latin hagiographic tradition" (48). The M^2 shows the fiancée fainting when Alexis leaves, "De deul que l'a, ciet a tere pasmée" (v. 267; Goddard 159), and awakens to regret her circumstances. Goddard notes that the M^2 reduces this episode of the fiancée's grief in comparison to the S manuscript (45), yet it is notable that the poet still amplifies the scene with a loss of consciousness, thus briefly showing the fiancée's devastation. In the M manuscript, as noted by Goddard, the mother faints three times when she learns that Alexis is back in Rome, whereas the S manuscript only shows the mother crying. The poet does not give as much dialogue in the M manuscript, but "some passions are heightened" (45). As the text shows, " Ot le li dame, si comenche a pasmer. / Li mére pasme trois fois en un tenant" (v. 723; Paris 301). While all other instances of fainting use a form of the verbs "choir" and "pasmer," the poet announces that the mother starts to faint and then uses "pasmer," adding intensity to the mother's grief by stating that she fainted three times in succession. Continuous fainting is an important element of the paradigm of fainting because the spectacle becomes more dramatic and amplifies the emotions of the character.

The *Vie de saint Alexis* is an important text because the different manuscripts depict the developing paradigm of syncope that occurs in the High Middle Ages. As the expression of emotions becomes more developed and central to the narration, the use of the motif of fainting increases. Furthermore, syncope helps the reader sympathize with the characters and their overwhelming emotions. Elliott explains that the S manuscript is critical because it changed the audience for hagiographical texts (68). Instead of hagiographical texts being written by and for the clerics, the S manuscript "increased interest in the depiction of characters capable of arousing sympathy" (68), and the "poet was a successful and artistic professional who correctly judged what his situation demanded" (76). Hagiography begins to reflect the interests of the audience, and syncope plays an essential role in the development of the characters, as focus turns to emotions, the role of women in the texts increase, and authors depict internal states. The *Vie de saint Alexis* prepares the reader for the changing paradigm, but also allows an analysis of the changing expressions to describe fainting in literature. *Alexis* notably uses a form of "choir" and "pasmer" for each instance in the Hildesheim and S manuscripts[23] with little variation, and subsequent texts will commonly employ similar expressions for a loss of consciousness due to overwhelming distress after the loss of a loved one.

While Gaston Paris published the M manuscript in 1872, Goddard notes that she corrected inaccuracies and publishes the first complete M^2 manuscript in her study (14). For a complete analysis of the M and M^2 manuscripts in relation to the S and L (Hildesheim) versions, see Alison Goddard Elliott's *The* Vie de saint Alexis *in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries: an Edition and Commentary*. See also Mary-Ann Stouck's *Medieval Saints: A Reader* that describes the version from the thirteenth-century *Legenda Aurea*. In this version of *Alexis*, the father faints from grief (537).

[23] "Veit mort son fil, a terre chiet pasmede" (Hildesheim v. 425) / Tel duel en ot, a poi ne ciet pasmée (S v. 420) / "Grans fu li diex, a terre ciet pasmée" (S v. 1142) / "Voit mort son fil: a terre ciet pasmée" (S v. 1190).

Vie de saint Gilles

The *Vie de saint Gilles* is another hagiographical text that uses the motif of syncope to express the great distress felt by the other characters when a saint dies. Basing his work on a tenth-century Latin prose text, Guillaume de Berneville wrote the *Vie de saint Gilles* in octosyllabic couplets in 1170 (Robertson 560). Following the same basic structure of the *Vie de saint Alexis*, the text shows Gilles leaving his fiancée and home in order to serve God. While *Alexis* focuses on feminine emotions, the *Vie de saint Gilles* demonstrates that fainting is not strictly a feminine phenomenon by providing notable examples of masculine fainting. Furthermore, this text serves as a transition between the amplified emotions in hagiography and the *planctus* scenes in the epics, as the *Vie de saint Gilles* develops the life of Gilles for a twelfth-century audience and also contains elements similar to the *chansons de geste*.

Guillaume de Berneville depicts the story of Gilles, who desires to live a solitary, humble life honoring God. However, solitude becomes impossible when his prayers and supplications to God result in the healing of the sick and paralyzed. Gilles's first miracle occurs at a young age when he heals a man by giving him an article of clothing, and even though he inherits great wealth after the death of his parents, he does not desire attention or possessions. However, as a result of his reputation and the attention that he attracts, Gilles leaves his fiancée and home, lives in constant penitence, and continually moves to a new area in order to keep his identity secret. In his traveling, he encounters sailors from Provence and a hermit who lives a life of penitence and fasting. He heals the mother of Theotrita, stays with the archdeacon Aurelïus, cures the sick with the hermit Veredemïus, and finally lives a secluded life for three years in the forest. Gilles's sole companion is his doe, but his seclusion ends when King Flovenz hunts the doe and injures Gilles. The king persuades Gilles to be the abbot of his new abbey, and even Charlemagne becomes

aware of his great fame. After miraculously receiving a letter from an angel revealing the sin to him, Gilles will eventually convince Charlemagne to repent of his one secret sin. Through his pious life, Gilles serves as an example for his fellow monks, protects the abbey, and is a witness for God until the end of his life.

The *Vie de saint Gilles* is much more than a story describing the life of a great saint, but is also a hagiographical romance that aims to entertain and edify (Robertson 560). Similar to the *Vie de saint Alexis*, the poet amplifies the legend in order to meet the interests of the audience. Françoise Laurent explains that the production of the "Vies de saints coïncide avec la pratique générale de la *translatio* qui se développa elle aussi très tôt dans cette ère géographique et culturelle" (xi). Therefore the story of the saints becomes more accessible to the lay public. As Duncan Robertson notes, the *Vie de saint Gilles* has elements of a sacred biography that depict the life and miracles of a great saint, but is also a hagiographical romance that is more fictional and contains "thematic links" with the courtly literature of the period, making the text more relevant (558-559, 563-564).

In order to attract the attention of the reader, Guillaume de Berneville uses certain elements to propel the narration, such as the descriptions of miracles and Gilles's constant search for solitude (Robertson 563). Additionally, instances of fainting occur at key transitional points in the romance. Similar to the *Vie de saint Alexis*, characters lose consciousness when they discover that the saint has left home to follow God, and again when the saint dies. However, the *Vie de saint Gilles* only contains masculine fainting. The instances incite an emotional response and frame the main action of the story, while also showing that syncope is an effective narrative device in both female and male characters.

Beginning with the first scene containing fainting, the narrator warns that the people's joy will turn to sadness when Gilles leaves his home and life behind. He further announces external signs of mourning by stating that the characters will cry and pull out their hair (v. 594-600).[24] In the next scene, the reader sees a young man lose consciousness upon discovering that Gilles escaped during the night,

> Li chamberleins s'aperçut ben
> ke sun seignur s'en est alez:
> il chet arere el lit pasmez.
> Quant fut estoers de cel pasmer,
> si se commence a desmenter,
> detort ses puinz, ses chevols tire (v. 670-675).

Like Alexis's mother in the S manuscript who falls fainted after discovering her son's absence, it is notable that Berneville uses a form of the expression "choir pasmer." However he dramatizes the spectacle by adding that the young man fell off of the bed, as this young man faints from sadness and guilt because he believes he is at fault for Gilles's departure. As anticipated, the young man awakens to cry and pull his hair, and due to his extreme mourning the rest of the palace awakens. When the people of the palace cannot find Gilles, they also moan, cry, rub their hands, and pull their hair. These external signs of internal distress illustrate the depth of their sorrow (v. 719-725), yet the young man's distress coupled with guilt is distinct since he is the only one to faint.

As the characters mourn the noble and valiant saint as if he were dead, and no longer wish to live (v. 748), this scene resembles the *planctus* in the *Vie de saint Alexis*. The sight of the absent saint begins the *planctus*, as the young man faints, and the people then praise the

[24] All citations of the *Vie de saint Gilles* come from Laurent's edition.

greatness of Gilles and mourn his loss. Several exclamatory and interrogative sentences illustrate their grief as they address their missing saint. This scene emphasizes the love that the people have for Gilles, but also serves as a boundary marker in the narration, as the narrator transitions to Gilles's escape to the sea, his wanderings, and search for solitude. While the people do not know what to do without Gilles, the narration pauses and emphasizes their hesitation. Unlike the *Vie de saint Alexis* in which syncope allows the pope to interject and address the futility of despair, the narrator of the *Vie de saint Gilles* simply states that according to him, crying is not worth anything because Gilles already left the country, "Pur neënt plurent, ço m'est vis: / a plein esloigne del païs" (v. 761-762). Crying is futile, not because it shows their lack of faith, but because Gilles already left and it will not bring him back.

The second instance of syncope in the *Vie de saint Gilles* also functions as a boundary marker in the hagiographical romance and transitions to the end of the story. Gilles's desire to live life in complete seclusion is impossible, and he becomes an abbot, serving as a role model for his fellow monks. As the end of his life approaches, he is content to die and go to Paradise, but the other monks lament, cry, moan, and pull their hair. More specifically, the poet dramatizes the scene by noting that exactly forty-eight monks faint and then reawaken to lament, "ainceis ke ben venist la nuit, / si en pasment quarante e oit. / Quant ennuié sunt de plurer, / sil comencent a regrater" (v. 3559-3562). The group's loss of consciousness intensifies the visual spectacle while also emphasizing the monks' extreme suffering and uncertainty of who will support them. This scene is distinct from the final scene of mourning in the *Vie de saint Alexis* because Gilles has not yet died. Not only does the reader witness the spectacle of the monks' collective faint and prolonged mourning, but Gilles does as well. He eventually hears their cries, prays for them, and proclaims the life of Christ. Missing is the mourning after the death of the saint, and the

interjection of the pope telling the people not to lament. Instead, the pause in the narration created by fainting and distress allows Gilles to interject and preach the good news of Christ. The text then concludes as the narrator states that angels took Gilles to Heaven, and that the saint offers a good example to follow.

The two scenes of syncope frame Gilles's life as a servant of God by illustrating the extent to which the other characters loved him, and the importance of following his life's example. The *planctus* and faint following his departure from his home to serve God follow the pattern of the *Vie de saint Alexis*, while the collective faint of the forty-eight monks at the end of his life follows a pattern found in the *Chanson de Roland* that illustrates distress even more dramatically. The influence of the legend of Saint Gilles on *Roland*, and vice versa, is evident, as for example, Saint Gilles's name appears in the *Chanson de Roland* when Gilles writes down the events of Turpin defeating hundreds of Saracens before his death (Laurent xxviii; *Roland* laisse 155). Moreover, in the *Vie de saint Gilles* when Charlemagne learns of Gilles's fame and comes to the abbey, Gilles tries to convince him to repent by referring to the battle of the *Val Ténébreux* in which God made the sun stand still for a day and gave the Christian army success (Laurent xl; *Gilles* v. 2890-2896; *Roland* laisse 180).[25] In addition to these two similarities, the most notable example is the epic influence of the *planctus* and the role of fainting on the *Vie de saint Gilles*. The text repeats the external signs of mourning such as crying and pulling one's hair, but the collective fainting of a group of men is key and only found in the *chansons de geste*.[26] All of these instances in *Gilles* show that fainting is not a narrative device that is strictly masculine or

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[25] Laurent also shows that the prologue of *Gilles* resembles the prologues of the *chansons de geste*, even if the goals of the prologues are different, since the author of *Gilles* writes to a more religious public (xxxii). The influence of the *Tristan* romance is also visible in the *Vie de saint Gilles*. For more information see Laurent's introduction of the *Vie de saint Gilles* p. xxxvi-xliii.

[26] As we will see in the second chapter of this study, the *romans d'antiquité* also contain scenes of groups of people fainting since these texts model the epic plaints.

feminine, but a means for the author to highlight importance scenes, themes, or characters with a dramatic spectacle. In this hagiographical romance a group of monks lose consciousness and lament the importance of the saint, and in the *Chanson de Roland* groups of knights faint, emphasizing the importance of another knight to their army and country.

Chanson de Roland

The *Chanson de Roland* is a valuable comparative text for the *Vie de saint Gilles* because of the similarities between the epics and hagiographical romances. Returning to the original eleventh-century *Vie de saint Alexis*, Johannes Zaal describes the common literary tradition of the *chansons de geste* and the *chansons de saints*, particularly *Roland* and *Alexis*. Throughout his article, "A lei francesca," he notes the similar feudal language, importance of duty, oral tradition of the texts, biblical allusions and vocabulary, and most importantly the *planctus* with external signs of mourning such as fainting.[27] Since the *Chanson de Roland* dates from around 1080,[28] an understanding of the *planctus* scenes in the original *Alexis* helps elucidate the heightened emotions in *Roland*. The lexis of syncope is often similar, fainting functions as a clear marker between two groups, or behaviors as in *Alexis*, and the subsequent *planctus* allows other characters to praise the deceased character and to receive an example to follow. Moreover, much like the sacrifice of a saint who leaves family to serve God, the epic heroes sacrifice themselves for their king and country. Zumthor specifically defines a *planctus* as "un passage d'une chanson de geste, exprimant la douleur ressentie par un personnage en présence du cadavre d'un compagnon d'armes" ("Etude" 219). This motif is very common in the *Chanson de Roland,* as

[27] This is a summary of his entire article, p. 77-152. He notes the common literary tradition on p. 143 and 152.

[28] The Oxford Bodleian manuscript from the twelfth century is the oldest version of the *Roland* and reproduces a text from around 1080-1100 (Jonin 8-9).

the ideological clash between the Christians and Saracens and the multiple scenes of injury and distress in battle offer many examples of fainting. Interestingly, the way in which *Roland* presents these scenes becomes a pattern in subsequent *chansons de geste*.

In this epic tale, Ganelon thinks that Roland chooses him deceitfully to be the ambassador for Charlemagne's army to the pagan king Marsile, and soon seizes his chance for revenge by conspiring with Marsile. Although Ganelon is later tried and condemned for treason, the enemy kills much of Charlemagne's army, including his nephew Roland, Olivier, and the *douze pairs*. Upon returning to the battle scene and finding his dead nephew, Charlemagne and his army mourn greatly, but regain their strength to fight, defeat Marsile's army, and punish Ganelon for his treason. Throughout the story fainting is prevalent, whether in a *planctus* scene, in battle, or due to love. While this epic presents two female characters, Bramimonde the Saracen queen, and Aude, Roland's fiancée, syncope in the *Chanson de Roland* is predominately a male phenomenon.

The first instance of fainting due to grief occurs just before Olivier's death. Similar to the mother in the *Vie de saint Alexis*, the sight of a dead or dying body gives rises to lamentation and syncope. As Roland sees the paleness of his dying comrade, he announces the great loss that Olivier's death will cause, and then faints on his horse Veillantif, "A icest mot sur sun cheval se pasmet" (v. 1988).[29] As opposed to the characters collapsing to the ground in *Alexis*, the poet remarks that Roland loses consciousness on his horse, and this becomes an important element of the paradigm for Roland. During his loss of consciousness, narrative time pauses, and the next *laisse* reiterates that he fainted, "As vus Rollant sur sun cheval pasmet/ E Oliver ki est mort naffret" (v. 1989). The repetition delays the action and the reader must focus on Roland's

[29] All citations from *Roland* come from Pierre Jonin's edition.

unconscious body and the dying Olivier. This scene insists upon Olivier's essential role in Charlemagne's army, as well as Roland's emotional attachment to him.

After Olivier's death, Roland again faints on his horse as he sees the dead body and laments, "A icest mot se pasmet li marchis / sur sun ceval que cleimet Veillantif" (v. 2030-2031). The language describing the faint is almost identical to the first, but the poet adds that Roland is stuck in his stirrups and cannot fall from his horse, "Afermet est a ses estreu d'or fin: / Quel part qu'il alt, ne poet mie chair" (v. 2032-2033). This image shows that even though the battle is currently delayed for the unconscious Roland, he is still very much prepared to fight as he continues on his horse. As he continues to lose consciousness and his own death approaches, Roland's fainting brings him closer to the ground, and the reader feels a sense of gravity that is literal and figurative.

Regaining consciousness is a crucial part of the motif of fainting since characters must refocus on the scene that caused them to faint. When Roland wakes up from his first faint and sees Olivier, the harsh reality of his friend's death causes him to lose consciousness again. After his second faint on his horse, Roland reawakens and refocuses on the disaster before him. His distress, mixed with anger after seeing his dead comrades and the two remaining men struggling to survive, leads him to fight valiantly. This scene is also a key example of the way in which fainting pauses and paradoxically propels the narration, and functions as a narrative prosthesis. The narration begins to depend on the fainted body, as the marked difference of Roland demands greater attention. This difference helps advance the plot because there is a need to understand and often rehabilitate the disabled body ("Prosthesis" 20-22). Roland's unconsciousness reveals more about his character and the depth of his emotions. His immediate desire to fight then recommences the text and the reader focuses on his devotion to Charlemagne.

Roland continues the battle and his head pounds from sounding the horn (v. 2099-2100). He blows it again, but this time the sound is softer as his exhausted body becomes weaker, "Trait l'olifan, fieblement le sunat" (v. 2104). He fights until the Saracens kill his horse (v. 2161) and the sight of his dead comrades causes him to faint for the third time. He cries, loses his color, and can no longer remain standing. Wanting to or not, he falls to the ground fainted, "Voeillet o nun, a tere chet pasmet" (v. 2220). His continued perseverance and exhaustion, mixed with mourning, force his loss of consciousness. Recalling the language of the *Vie de saint Alexis*, this faint reinforces Roland's extreme distress, shows that it is involuntary, and emphasizes that he is no longer on his horse. When he reawakens, the *planctus* continues and he laments the death of the archbishop Turpin, a great knight and servant of God.

Anticipating his death, Roland positions himself between two trees on a hill, and as the text explains, falls on the ground and faints because death is near, "Sur l'erbe verte si est caeit envers: / La s'est pasmet, kar la mort li est près" (v. 2269-2270). Emphasized by the repetition at the beginning of the next *laisse*, all action seems to stop. However, syncope as a narrative prosthesis again propels the narration, and the fainted Roland creates an opportunity for the enemy. Seeing the faint, a Saracen feigns death in order to take Roland's sword, Durendal, but Roland slowly regains consciousness, notices the ruse, and kills him (*laisse* 169-170). In her study on sickness in literature, Anne-Cécile Le Ribeuz notes that fake illnesses can be weapons for those who are physically weak (100). The Saracen is depicted as weaker as he utilizes this tactic, but he cannot conquer Roland even with trickery. Roland already stands apart as the last remaining Christian soldier, and this scene further distinguishes his strength. Even though the feigned loss of consciousness of the Saracen compounds his distress, Roland is victorious despite his seemingly weak body.

Furthermore, Le Ribeuz explains that a sickness can be a paradoxical sign of physical and moral force, as Saracens, for example, die quickly in battle instead of enduring a long illness that redirects the attention of the reader (99). She says, "seuls les courageux et les endurants pâtissent de ces maladies, les faibles, les félons et les sarrasins ne connaissent que des maux violents qui les emportent rapidement: ils ne sont pas dignes de l'attention du lecteur et donc d'endurer une longue maladie" (100). Sickness, or fainting in this epic, separates the continually fainting Roland from the Saracens. For example, Roland remains on his horse, even while fainted, and keeps fighting in spite of his injuries and fading eyesight. His continual fainting does not show weakness, but prowess, and faithfulness to Charlemagne and France. On the other hand, the nephew of the Saracen king, Aelroth, is quickly killed and forgotten in the narration, "Pleine sa hanste del cheval l'abat mort" (v. 1204). This concept also applies to entire armies and not just individual knights, as Zumthor, in his study of the *planctus* in the *Chanson de Roland*, supports the unique distinction by showing that all the *planctus* scenes are attributed to the Christians ("Etude" 232). While both camps suffer distress due to loss and injury during battle, fainting distinguishes the Christian camp. Once it is quickly mentioned that some Saracens faint and some die in battle (v. 1348), and king Marsile, losing the battle, faints from pain and blood loss after losing his right hand (v. 2575). However, the poet reserves the *planctus* scenes and descriptions of losing consciousness for the Christian army. Fainting becomes a clear boundary marker between the two camps and highlights valiance and strength.

The separation between the two groups is clearly visible with the dual-focus theory outlined by Rick Altman in his *Theory of Narrative*. Using this theory, two groups that are easily identifiable by ideology, and in this case religion, are fighting over a contested space until the two groups become one. A brief review of Altman's theory using key examples from the text

elucidates the importance of syncope to highlight this dual-focus nature of the *Chanson de Roland*.[30] Altman shows that texts may have elements of the single, multi, or dual-focus theories, but that *Roland* presents itself mainly as a dual-focus text, as the poet sets the Christian camp and the Saracen camp against each other. According to Altman, there must be simple rules, such as the need to surrender or fight, and the two groups should have elements of comparison as well as several factors that distinguish one from the other. It is easy to note the similarities between the two camps, each loyal to their own feudal system, and who have battle cries, names for their swords and horses, and a belief that they are fighting for the true ideal. The Saracen side has "*counter*part characters, *counter*feit gods, *counter*attacks designed to *counter*act" (Altman 38). Ideology separates the two groups, and the two sides mirror each other. The group also becomes essential, instead of one individual, and each member has a strong allegiance to the group or belief. Roland's character is distinct, as his comrades do not faint, and Charlemagne and the Christian army lose consciousness because of his death. He is a critical member of the Christian army, and he refuses to blow the horn to alert Charlemagne due to pride. Yet despite appearances, Roland's actions are not solely selfish. His "decision not to sound the olifant at the crucial moment before battle is thus not an expression of *démesure* but a principled stance and a reasoned strategy. He has already made clear that to him, proper vassalage means the willingness to suffer any hardship for one's lord" (Kinoshita 32). His willingness to fight and sacrifice himself shows his commitment to the group that is more important. In the end, Charlemagne's army is still able to defeat the Saracen army without him.

Additional important elements of the dual-focus theory include the omniscient narrator and an intermediary character that disrupts the balance by crossing the separation between the

[30] Altman outlines his theory and relates it directly to the *Chanson de Roland* in chapters 2-3 of his *Theory of Narrative*. I present some of his key points here.

two groups. It is then this imbalance that advances the plot. Ganelon, for example, functions as the intermediary when he sides with Marsile, thus giving the Saracen army an advantage at the beginning of the battle of Roncevaux. Finally, in a dual-focus text, the reader understands the outcome of the story because of established traditions and beliefs. As a result, the reader knows that the Christian army will be successful from the beginning. Critics often analyze the *Chanson de Roland* as a religious battle or crusade literature. Jenkins, for example, states that "the poem is best explained as an effort not merely to promote the general cause of Christianity versus Islam, but particularly to arouse French public opinion to the great peril in which the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem stood…" (xliv). On the other hand, Kinoshita addresses the idea of the *Chanson de Roland* as a text showing competing ideologies, but says that the Christians and Saracens are more concerned with material gain and *parias* than conversion (22-23). However, no matter which argument the reader follows, both critical ideas reflect the need to understand the highlighted similarities and differences between the two groups, and the dual-focus theory elucidates these similarities and distinguishing differences.

With the dual-focus theory, the function of syncope as a boundary marker between characters and groups is apparent. As Roland sacrifices himself for the group, he perseveres to the end, despite his ailing body and continual fainting. In a final act, he illustrates his devotion as he tries to destroy his sword to protect it from the Saracens. While his plaint redirects to the sword causing him pain and suffering, "Pur ceste espee ai dulor e pesance" (v. 2335), his vision fades and his face loses all its color (v. 2297, 2299). Contemporary medical treatises, such as the twelfth-century *Causae et curae* of Hildegard of Bingen, commonly diagnose illness and approaching death based on vision and the color of the cheeks. Hildegard notes that the natural red color of the cheeks is a sign of the soul's life (244). The text, however, emphasizes that

Roland's face has lost color, and the paradigm of fainting shows that paleness commonly occurs before a loss of consciousness. Hildegard also states that eyes that are not luminous carry a sign of death because the soul is without strength and veiled (243). Just before his death, Olivier becomes pale (v. 1979) and he mistakenly attacks Roland because of his fading vision (v. 1991). Roland's bodily weakness is evident as he presents the same symptoms and faints continually. Over the next one hundred lines, Roland praises and mourns his sword, and confesses his sins before his death. Continuing in other epics, fainting before death creates an important confessional space because it slows narrative time and allows the characters to prepare themselves for death.

The *planctus* of Roland is over, yet his death begins the mourning, hyperbolic fainting, and revenge of Charlemagne's army. Upon arriving at Roncevaux, a distressed Charlemagne immediately searches for Roland and the rest of the *douze pairs*, evoking the *ubi sunt* motif. Using a common gesture to show grief, he pulls his beard, "Tiret sa barbe cum hom ki est iret" (v. 2414), while 20,000 of his men fall to the ground fainted, "Plurent des oilz si baron chevaler; / Encuntre tere se pasment .XX. millers" (v. 2415-16). This obvious exaggeration illustrates externally the gravity of their emotions, as in the *Vie de saint Gilles*, and the language describing the faint mimics the distressed mother in *Alexis* and the final faints punctuating the death of Roland. With these examples, stating that a character fell completely to the ground obviously signals complete devastation. Just before the burial of Roland, Olivier, and Turpin, 100,000 men collapse to the ground in an amplified version of the previous scene, "Cent mille Francs s'en pasment cuntre terre" (v. 2932). These exaggerations accentuate the performance of fainting and frame the *planctus* of Charlemagne. Moreover, all the *planctus* scenes in the *Chanson de Roland*

end soon after the army's loss of consciousness, thus transforming this scene into a memorable transition and textual marker.[31]

Following the fainting of 20,000 men, the poet reiterates that most of Charlemagne's army lies fainted on the ground, "Encuntre tere se pasment li plusur" (v. 2422). As the action recommences, the poet is aware of narrative time in another way. An angel arrives telling Charlemagne that his prayers were answered, and in a direct allusion to the Biblical story of Joshua,[32] the sun stands still allowing the Christian army to defeat the Saracens (*laisse* 180). In these scenes, the fainting of 20,000 soldiers slows narrative time and redirects the reader's attention to distress and defeat, but fainting as a narrative prosthesis propels the reawakened army to action. As the sun stands still, the narration again slows and emphasizes the importance of this victory.

The joy of victory soon turns to sorrow when Charlemagne reflects on the death of Roland and the *douze pairs*. Upon finding Roland's body, anguish causes him to faint on the body of his nephew, "Sur lui se pasmet, tant par est anguissus" (v. 2880). The next two *laisses similaires*[33] insist on Charlemagne's distress and the repetition emphasizes the delay created by

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[31] According to Zumthor, the first *planctus* begins at verse 1850, and the final *planctus* ends with verse 3000 ("Etude" 231). The first *planctus* then corresponds with Roland's first faint at Olivier's death (v. 1986), and the final with the collapse of 100,000 knights (v. 2932). Also see Zumthor's articles, "Les *planctus* épiques" and "Etude typologique des *planctus* contenus dans *La Chanson de Roland*" for an analysis of the narrative and lyrical *planctus*.

[32] The tenth chapter of *Joshua*. When the Amorites are attacking the Israelites, Joshua prays for the sun to stand still over Gibeon, and the enemy is defeated when the LORD fights for Israel.

[33]

Li empereres de pasmeisuns revint.
Naimes li dux e li quens Acelin,
Gefrei d'Anjou e sun frère Tierri
Prenent le rei, sil drecent suz un pin.
Guardet a la tere, veit sun nevold gesir.
Tant dulcement a regreter le prist:
"Amis Rollant, de tei ait Deus mercit!
Unques nulls hom tel chevaler ne vit
Por granz batailles juster e defenir.
La meie honor est turnet en declin."
Carles se pasmet, ne s'en pout astenir.

Carles li reis se vint de pasmeisuns;
Par les mains le tienent .IIII. de ses barons.
Guardet a tere, vei gesir sun nevuld.
Cors ad gaillard, perdue ad sa culur,
Turnez ses oilz, mult li sunt tenebros
Carles le pleint par feid e par amur:
"Ami Rollant, Dues metet t'anme en flors,
En pareïs, entre les glorius!
Cum en Espaigne venis a mal seignur!
Jamais n'ert jurn de tei n'aie dulur.
Cum decarrat ma force e ma baldur!

Charlemagne's continuous fainting. As he awakens to pronounce a funeral lament and say that his honor is declining, "La meie honor est turnet en declin" (v. 2890), he cannot stop fainting, "Carles se pasmet, ne s'en pout astenir" (v. 2891). With Charlemagne's emotions dramatically and externally evident, four of his barons must support his weak body, "Carles li reis se vint de pasmeisuns; / Par les mains le tienent .III. de ses barons" (v. 2892-2893). Moreover, as Charlemagne continues his lamentations, he notes Roland's paleness and the darkness of his eyes, "…perdue ad sa culur,/ Turnez ses oilz, mult li sunt tenebros" (v. 2895-2896), thus reinforcing Hildegard's belief that eyes that are not luminous carry a sign of death.

Charlemagne's great distress and statement that he is losing his honor have nothing to do with shame, but reinforces the importance of Roland to the army and the ideology of the feudal code. Repeated fainting can be seen as shameful in subsequent texts, as we will see in the *Chanson d'Antioche* with Soliman and the loss of his kingdom, and later with Claudas in the *Lancelot en prose*, who is ashamed that his men see him faint during battle. However in this scene of *Roland*, the spectacle that Charlemagne creates emphasizes his attachment to Roland and the distress of defeat, and his men share in his grief. The *planctus* continues for another fifty lines until Geoffroy d'Anjou interjects and tells him not to abandon himself to mourning, but to give the men proper burials (*laisse* 211). Like the pope who interjects in *Alexis* and tells the people not to despair, Geoffroy's words stop the spectacle and the scene transitions to burial. Further reinforcing the similar tradition between hagiography and the epic genre, the similarities

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AOI. (v. 2881-2891). N'en avrai ja ki sustienget m'onur:
Suz ciel ne quid aveir ami un sul;
Se jo ai parenz, n'en i ad nul si proz."
Trait ses crignels, pleines ses mains amsdous;
Cent milie Franc en unt si grant dulur
N'en i ad cel ki durement ne plurt. AOI
(v. 2892-2908)

between *Alexis*, *Gilles*, and *Roland* give the reader a point of reference that illustrates the importance of a certain character, the depth of sorrow felt by the others, and the futility of prolonged despair.

As we have seen, the *Chanson de Roland* focuses on masculine fainting and the poet uses the motif of fainting to redirect the reader's attention to Roland and the Christian army. Few women are mentioned, except Bramimonde, Marsile's queen, and Roland's fiancée, Aude. Even though these characters seem relatively minor, Sharon Kinoshita states that the women hold a significant role in the story because they "mediate male relations"; Aude creates tension between Oliver and Roland, and Bramimonde is important in the victory of Charlemagne (Kinoshita 35).[34] In a dual-focus text, it is notable that the author presents one Christian female character that faints, and one Saracen female character that does not. After her husband's mortal injuries in battle, Bramimonde mourns the destiny of her husband, and along with 20,000 men curses their own idols, Charlemagne, and France (*laisse* 187). Her lamentation is distinct from the Christian army and does not contain the elements of a *planctus*, as defined by Zumthor and Zaal. Bramimonde curses what she has lost instead of praising glory and valiance, and defeat without hope causes despair. Her emotion is evident as she cries, pulls her hair, and laments the destiny of the Saracen army, yet she does not lose consciousness. This follows the pattern throughout the *Chanson de Roland* in which only the Christian men or women present plaints and faint from emotion or injury.

Keeping with the dual-focus nature, the author presents a Christian female who illustrates the opposite of her Saracen counterpart. Bramimonde exchanges all she has for a new life when she revolts against her gods and then chooses to convert to Christianity. However Aude refuses to change and will not exchange her love for Roland for another man, but sacrifices her life as a

[34] Aude is Olivier's sister and Roland's fiancée.

result (Kinoshita 43). Her absolute devotion to Roland causes her to fall dead at the feet of Charlemagne when she receives the devastating news that he died (*laisse* 268). While dramatic and theatrical, Aude's collapse represents her complete faithfulness, as she is unwilling to transfer her love to another man since she promised it to Roland. She exclaims that she does not want to live without Roland, loses her color, and falls at the feet of Charlemagne, "Après Rollant que jo vive remaigne!' / Pert la color, chet as piez Carlemagne, / Sempres est morte…" (v. 3719-3721). Charlemagne mistakenly believes that Aude has only fainted, "Quidet li reis que el se seit pasmee" (v. 3724), but when he tries to help her stand and her head remains on her shoulder he realizes that she is dead. Misdiagnosing fainting or death becomes a common motif in imaginative literature, as we will see in *Cligès*, the *Lais* of Marie de France, and *Lancelot en prose*, for example. It can create confusion and suspense in the text as characters try to diagnose the collapse. In *Roland*, Charlemagne and the other characters may be confused, but it is very clear to the reader that Aude died since the narrator states it explicitly. On the other hand, in *Eliduc* by Marie de France, the reader, along with the characters in the story are not certain if Guilliadon is alive, unconscious, or dead. The confusion therefore creates drama, as an unconscious state is not easily discernable.

Medieval medical literature also recognized the difficulty of distinguishing between fainting and death. Daniele Alexandre-Bidon analyzes the clinical signs of death and the various means of verification. He remarks that many medical books written by the clergy of the university focused their diagnoses on the living instead of the dead, although the surgeon, Guy de Chauliac, from the fourteenth century began to offer means of reanimating the fainted, or seemingly dead (148). Alexandre-Bidon further notes Hildegard's idea that a limpness of the body occurs when the soul leaves the body, "l'âme tient fortement sous son pouvoir les

articulation des membres; et, lorsqu'elle s'apprête à sortir du corps, elle relâche ces articulations" (165; Hildegard 247). A completely weak body that does not regain consciousness can therefore be assumed to be dead, as in the case of Aude.

Aude's collapse is an important scene in the *Chanson de Roland* because her seemingly fainted body pauses the narration briefly and emphasizes her devotion to Roland in both her language and actions. Like Charlemagne or the thousands of soldiers, Aude becomes a textually marked body focusing the narration on the greatness of Roland, and as a result, the greatness of the ideology for which they are fighting. While *planctus* scenes contain external signs of distress such as crying or men pulling their beards (Zumthor 228), they do not always include fainting, and the poet of the *Chanson de Roland* chooses to use this motif in order to highlight deep distress. As a part of the dramatized *planctus*, syncope represents much more than a simple loss of consciousness and creates memorable transitions and distinctions. A faint also redirects attention more decisively than crying alone, and allows the poet to highlight certain characters and ideologies during the unique pause in narrative time. The motif of fainting is a powerful narrative tool because a weak fainting body can actually illustrate strength, perseverance, and devotion. The *Chanson de Roland* is meaningful to the epic genre since it serves as a *lieu de mémoire* for French nationalism (Kinoshita 45) and "its battlefield ethos and its representation of Christians and pagans were taken as normative of the genre" (34). Moreover, in an analysis of syncope, this text is critically important because it develops the paradigm of fainting due to distress. In other epics or medieval romances, emotional, prolonged masculine fainting and death scenes, duality between two different groups, and group faints remind readers of the *Chanson de Roland* and help us to understand the intensity of the moment, the pause in narrative time, and the textually marked character.

Chanson d'Antioche

After a close reading of the *Chanson de Roland* the reader begins to expect fainting as an essential element of the *planctus*. However, the expectations can be shifted, as we have seen in *Roland*, because the Saracen army does not lose consciousness. In the *Chanson d'Antioche* the situation reverses and syncope is a distinguishing element of the Saracen army instead of the Christian army. This epic text reminds readers of the *Chanson de Roland*, as the text narrates the battles of the Christian army versus the Saracen army, and a loss of consciousness externally conveys extreme grief and even despair. Furthermore, Altman's dual-focus theory is clearly applicable and elucidates the motif of fainting for both groups. The major difference from *Roland* is that the author of *Antioche* adapts the motif to emphasize despair and weakness, instead of strength, perseverance, and devotion.

The origins of this *chanson de geste* are difficult to confirm. As the poet notes in the epic text and as Susan Edgington explains in her analysis, it is commonly assumed that Richard le Pèlerin was an eyewitness to the crusade account (v. 9014)[35], and that the mentioned Graindor de Douai (v. 14) reworked the account at the end of the twelfth century into a trilogy containing the *Chanson des Chétifs* and the *Chanson de Jérusalem*. There is no solid evidence that either Richard or Graindor were the authors of this text (Edgington 3-8), but critiques agree that a version of the *Chanson d'Antioche* existed at the end of the twelfth century (Edgington 13; Guidot, *Antioche* 10). Edgington dates the existing version of *Antioche* from the beginning of the thirteenth century (24). Showing similarities with the Latin chronicles of Robert the Monk and Albert of Aachen, this epic recounts the story of the first crusade (15-19, 47). Guidot states that the *Chanson d'Antioche* is different from traditional *chansons de geste* because of the strong historic and geographic setting, but that the reader also notices the episodes with traditional epic

[35] All citations from the *Chanson d'Antioche* come from Bernard Guidot's edition.

heroes (*Antioche* 108-109). The realistic descriptions added to scenes resembling the *chansons de geste* incite pity and sympathy from the reader, and are notable in instances of fainting.

In the *Chanson d'Antioche*, the reader follows the story of the Christian army crusading to capture the city of Antioch. Both armies are compelled to fight, but also suffer heavy loses. The narrator illustrates the dual-focus nature of the text and emphasizes the destruction that each side sustains by describing the suffering of the Christian army and then saying that it is the other side's turn to suffer distress, "Hui mais ert Solimans trestous desbaretés" (v. 2155). Throughout the text, the narrator often includes himself in the Christian camp by employing the personal pronoun "we," and is a biased eyewitness, except in instances when he is unable to observe events in the Saracen camp (v. 6837).[36] During fierce battles, suffering results from the death of loved ones and harsh conditions, and the text gives battle strategies, details of torture, and states each side's disregard for the life of the enemy. In the beginning, Pierre l'Ermite gathers troops and enlists the help of the pope in Rome while Corbaran, the leader of the Saracen army, also prepares his troops. Throughout this vast epic, Christian soldiers do occasionally faint, but the narrator emphasizes that the Saracen leaders Garison and Soliman frequently lose consciousness. Like the *Chanson de Roland*, the Christians are triumphant at the end, and the suffering highlights many emotions and characteristics of both sides.

As expected when reading a crusade epic, the depictions of the intense fighting create concern, horror, and emotion, and one of the main strategies of the pagan army is to weaken the Christian army by starvation. The narrator frequently remarks that the conditions were so horrible that the men would have died if God had not been on their side. Hunger causes the first instance of fainting in the Christian camp when the Christians see the Turks eating, "De

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[36] In some instances the narrator states that he heard that certain events happened in a certain way, "Ne demora puis gaires, si com oï conter" (v. 6837).

l'angoisse et del fain assés s'en i pasma" (v. 619). In addition to emotional and psychological fainting, texts also describe characters that lose consciousness due to painful injury, blood loss, or hunger, in this instance. These examples provide more realistic responses to an external factor that allow the reader to further relate to the characters. Eleventh-century medical treatises state the obvious need for food and drink, such as Avicenna's *Cantica Avicennae* and the *Tacuinum sanitatis* that list them as one of the six necessary items for the daily preservation of health (Avicenna 22, *Tacuinum* 8). In a more poetic way, Hildegard describes the need for water and compares the body to the earth and states that if the earth is too humid, it is damaged, but if it has no humidity, it is not fertile or productive. In the same way, a balance of humidity is needed, because too much makes the man sick, but too little is dangerous (189-190). Furthermore, she says that if a person abstains from food for too long, the elements in the body become harmful and the fire and the water can, for example, "s'affrontent avec violence" (178).

This first instance of syncope in *Antioche* is also the first mention of starvation. From the beginning this dramatic detail highlights the cruelty of the enemy and emphasizes the distress of the Christian army. Illustrating that the men faint ensures that the reader sympathizes with the characters. The narrator further shows the gravity of the situation when the starving men die a few verses later (v. 656). In her article "La souffrance et la mort dans la *Chanson d'Antioche*," Jouda Sellami compares the epic to the chronicle by Guillaume de Tyr and confirms that while using elements from the traditional *chansons de geste*, the text also offers realistic descriptions of suffering and death like the chronicles (106). Hunger or famine is mentioned several times in different ways. A few examples include when they men die from hunger (v. 656), become afraid when they cannot find food (v. 919-920), and are tormented by this lack (v. 2294, 3413). The opposing Saracen army even threatens the soldiers by saying that they will be forced to eat their

horses (v. 3011-3012). From the beginning of the text, the narrator claims that his story is not a fable and contains only the truth (v. 66-67), and the realistic descriptions of suffering and cruelty support his claims. Starvation further creates pity for the Christian army as the men suffer, faint, and sacrifice their lives.

In another scene, the knights eat their horses, as hunger and freezing conditions torment them, and they turn pale, tear their clothing, and cry out in distress (*laisse* 155). Despite the descriptive passage of suffering of both men and animals, the men only turn pale and do not yet lose consciousness, "De l'angoisse de fain estoit cascuns palis" (v. 3427). Just as both Olivier and Roland lose their color in *Roland,*[37] the paleness illustrates that these men are close to collapsing and even close to death. While the reader expects a loss of consciousness, extended descriptions of the knights' distress slows narrative time, and over the next sixty verses, the narrator emphasizes the intense suffering that no one has ever endured, "Onques mais nule gens tel paine ne sofri" (v. 3428). The tone briefly lightens when Godefroy de Bouillon encourages the men by proclaiming that God will save them, but the next *laisse* again recounts the famine and suffering. The anticipated loss of consciousness occurs when the narrator describes hyperbolically how the severe famine makes the knights eat the soles of their shoes without salt, and causes many of them to faint from hunger, "Petit i remest huese a mangier ne soller, / Nes les tacons desous manjüent sans saler! / Tant maint en veïssiés de famine pasmer!" (v. 3485-3487). In her analysis, Sellami says that the details of paleness, famine, and fainting provoke "un double sentiment de colère et de pitié chez les barons" (114), as this spectacle compels the knights to share their food so that their fellow knights do not die. The battle then recommences with Bohémond, the Christian baron and eventual prince of Antioch, leading them all to fight.

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[37] "desculuret e pale" (v.1979); "sa culur ad perdue" (v. 2299)

These two instances of syncope in the Christian army illustrate both their suffering and their perseverance, but the motif of fainting is relatively minor. These scenes of famine are significant and leave a realistic impression on the reader, but the narrator does not focus on their weaknesses. Similarly to the *Chanson de Roland* in which Roland shows his strength and prowess by continuing despite his physical weakness, the Christian army shows its resilience and strength because they remain collectively strong. For example, when the Christian army hears that Corbaran thinks they are too weak to fight and plans to take them prisoner, they all yell that they would rather be killed fighting than dying of hunger, "Mius volons ester ocis la fors enmi ces prés/ Que ci morons de fain ensi com vos veés" (v. 7520-7521). Their fainting weak bodies are juxtaposed with their inner strength and perseverance. As they fast and prepare for battle (*laisse* 302), their bodies appear strong and rich, and instill fear in their enemies who expect them to be weak and helpless (*laisse* 329).

In terms of fainting, hopelessness, and despair, the narrator focuses on the Saracen camp, and more specifically the leaders of the army. Sellami notes that unlike Guillaume de Tyr's chronicle, "la *Chanson d'Antioche* s'aligne sur la tradition épique en exprimant la douleur avec un certain nombre de clichés composés par des gestes, des cris, des pleurs et des paroles" (111). Syncope is therefore an important narrative device in the *Chanson d'Antioche* because it shows realistic details of the effect of famine, while also connecting this epic to the spectacle of suffering and the epic tradition that employs external signs of suffering, such as crying, pulling beards, and especially fainting. Unlike in the *Vie de saint Alexis* or *Chanson de Roland* where a loss of consciousness is a key element of the *planctus* and highlights the greatness of a character, the *Chanson d'Antioche* uses fainting to highlight despair and hopelessness.

Following Altman's dual-focus theory, both the Christian and Saracen camps experience extreme emotions, but the distinguishing factor is how they respond to these emotions. The Saracen emir Soliman, for example, loses consciousness numerous times because of the outcome of the battles. When the Christians capture Nicée, "Quatre fois se pasma desor l'erbe florie" (v. 1766). The narrator often expresses that the Saracen men faint four times. As Guidot explains, the *chanson de geste* is "un art fondé sur le regard et le sens du spectacle" (*Antioche* 123), and the frequency of fainting adds to this spectacle. In this instance, Soliman awakens and desires revenge, but thinking about his city causes him to again lose consciousness four times:

> Au dol que il demaine s'est .IIII. fois pasmés
> Dist ses fils: 'Bels dols pere, molt grant tor en avés,
> Tant com vos saves sains, qui si vos dementés.
> -Bels fils, dist Solimans, jo l'ai a faire assés,
> Car de toute ma terre garde Nique les clés.' (v. 1812-1816).

Characters often interrupt scenes of intense mourning and fainting, but instead of contrasting despair with hope, as is the case in the *Vie de saint Alexis*, Soliman's son emphasizes his father's unjustified behavior since he is not sick. However, Soliman quickly justifies his actions, stating that Nicée is one of his greatest possessions. These instances of fainting stress Soliman's despair, and distinguish the behaviors of the Christians and Saracens. For example, the father of Gonzelon laments the loss of his son, who is killed by Soliman, but the mourning stops when the bishop reminds the father that he should rejoice in his faith in God because the boy's soul received salvation (v. 2541-2544). On the other hand, Soliman justifies his actions and mourns his material possessions. In a parallel scene to Bramimonde's despair in the *Chanson de Roland*, Soliman accuses his god of sleeping and being powerless (v. 1808-1809). As Sellami explains,

"le développement excessif du deuil chez les Sarrasins s'explique à la fois par leur peur de la mort, et par l'inefficacité de leurs dieux" (111).

This trope continues throughout the text, as fainting represents despair. Soliman exemplifies despair by his repeated loss of consciousness[38] that occurs at least two more times before he enlists the help of other leaders, first Garsion, then Corbaran. When Corbaran has a nightmare about the outcome of the battle, Soliman tells him not to give himself over to lamentations because their god will help (v. 6629-6630), paralleling the Christian leaders' motivating speech to the army. This statement is ironic since Soliman's frequent fainting, lamentations, and behavior throughout the text contradict his attempt at optimism. The author also uses the weakness of Soliman to praise the strength of the Christian army, as Soliman says that the army is strong and will not stop fighting (*laisse* 209).

Syncope becomes a distinguishing characteristic of another Saracen leader, Garsion. He arrives to deliver Soliman, yet his first appearance in the text presents him as weak. The narrator says that Garsion enters into a sort of trance mimicking a loss of consciousness after the death of his son, "Quant l'entent Garsïons, dont par fu si pensans / K'il ne desist .I. mot por .C. mile bezans" (v. 2716-2717).[39] His overwhelming emotions cause him to withdraw from society, and not even 100,000 gold coins could revive him. While trances reoccur more frequently in the verse and prose romances, the author of this epic uses syncope in the form of a trance-like state to emphasize Garsion's emotional suffering. A form of the adjective *pensans* is very common in the *Lancelot en prose*, and describes much more than a simple thought. The author relates

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[38] Still upset about losing Nicée, Soliman faints in front of his army, "Dont plorerent paien por amor lor segnor, / Et Solimans se pasme qui al cuer ot tenror" (v. 1828-1829); Lost in thought thinking about his army's defeat, he faints on his horse and one of his men must keep him from falling, "Ja fust queüs pasmés de son mulet amblans / Quant le tint par les bras uns des Popelicans." (v. 2241-2242).

[39] Guidot translates the Old French as, "Ayant entendu ces propos, Garsion fut plongé dans un abîme de perplexité" (*Antioche* 405). This "abîme de perplexité" correctly illustrates the depth of Garsion's thoughts and separation from society.

Garsion's semi-unconscious state by insisting that not even thousands of gold coins could stop his thoughts and depression. As discussed in the introduction of this study, Catherine Clément describes depression as a sort of social syncope because characters are separated and withdrawn from society (47). Garsion's character seems to be suspended, as the author ends the *laisse* with this trance-like state, and repeats the scene at the beginning of the next *laisse*. During the pause in action surrounding Garsion, the text depicts the success of the Christian army, as they continue to attack, liberate German prisoners who were captured in Antioch, and cause the Saracens to flee (*laisses* 123-124).

The next time that the reader sees Garsion, syncope again surrounds his character because he hears the news of his army's defeat, becomes angry, and faints, "Quant l'entent Garsïons, près n'a le sens dervé, / De maltalent et d'ire s'est .IIII. fois pasmé. / Et quant se redreça, forment s'est dementé." (v. 2805-2807). Concerning syncope, Clément states that "le retour au jour provoque une surprise aussi grave que fut la surprise première de la syncope" (51). This statement applies well to Garsion who originally withdraws due to the devastating news of the loss of his son. The news of the freed prisoners and loss in battle brings him back to the text and out of his trance, but reality is so shocking and maddening that he faints. Like Soliman, Garsion's fainting in succession punctuates the depth of his emotions. Interestingly in the *Chanson d'Antioche*, the detail of repeated fainting in succession is another distinguishing factor between the Christians and the Saracens since the Christian characters only faint once. Moreover, this scene provides a rare instance in which a character faints due to anger. While fainting occurs due to myriad reasons in my chosen texts, anger is not common. Garsion stands apart as a man unable to control his emotions, and the Christian army is seen as having the advantage.

Although Garsion seeks vengeance, his anger is not enough to lead him to victory. In the next *laisse*, the narrator provides details of the approaching Christian army and Soliman who faints four times when he sees them, "Et reconoist l'ensegne, le flanbe del Brandon; / .IIII. fois se pasma c'ainc ne dist o ne non" (v. 2849-2850). He awakens to proclaim that Garsion is covered in shame because he lost the city. Garsion tries to regain control, but as the battle continues his situation becomes even more dire when he loses his nephew.[40] Understanding that defeat is eminent, Garsion's deep despair is visible as he claps his hands so hard his nails bleed and pulls out his own beard (v. 4460-4462). His extreme lamentation leads him to cut off his beard and, as a result, part of his own chin as a sign that he is completely devastated (v. 4645-4647). Unlike a *planctus* scene with intense crying and fainting, Garsion is not lamenting the loss of another person, but mourning his own hopeless situation. Sellami explains, "contrairement au *planctus* épique, principalement focalisé sur le mort…ce discours est centré sur les survivants eux-mêmes qui souhaitent tous un secours humain ou providentiel pour échapper au destin tragique réservé à leurs proches" (111). Instances of syncope surround Garsion's character to illustrate hopelessness and intensifying anger, as defeat causes him to faint more than seven times, "Dont a tel duel li rois a poi n'est enragiés, / Plus de .VII. fois se pasme sor le marbre entailliés" (v. 9374-9375). Finally, in a last attempt for revenge, Garsion leaves to enlist help. However, as he continues to mourn and is in a trance-like state of syncope, "Toute nuit va pensant sor le col del destrier" (v. 9399), a knight arrives and kills him. A trance-like state

[40] The resulting battles offer another instance of syncope in the Christian army that highlights their perseverance and faithfulness to their beliefs. Garsion captures the Christian knight Renaud, who refuses to convert to save his life. The jailers beat Renaud severely and then bring him unconscious on a horse to Garsion, "Garsïons vient avant, le brant li a osté, / Sor .I. ceval le lievent tot sanglent et pasmé, / Al palais Garsïon l'en ont li Turc mené" (v. 4020-4022). Regaining consciousness, Renaud would rather die than convert, and this instance of fainting emphasizes his faithfulness despite his overwhelming injuries that cause him to faint. Instead of killing him, Garsion treats his injuries and provides him with as much food and clothing as he desires. Garsion's plan is to exchange Renaud and riches for his nephew who is a prisoner of the Christian army. However, when the Christians understand Garsion's ruse, and Garsion sees that his nephew will not recover from his injuries, Renaud is tortured and the battle continues.

introduces and concludes the character of Garsion, and social syncope and fainting highlight his inability to control his own emotions, and the Saracen army's inability to win the battle.

The *Chanson d'Antioche* obviously illustrates devastation in both camps, and syncope helps highlight the different kinds of suffering. The distress of the Christian camp is evident as they collapse from hunger, yet the sadness and hopelessness of the Saracen camp is memorable for the reader as the leaders continue to lose consciousness. Since fainting in this epic is ideological and becomes expected with the Saracens, it is even more notable when Christian characters, who experience some of the same emotions, do not faint.[41] The characters in each group undergo many of the same emotions and situations, in keeping with the dual-focus theory, yet the results are different, and syncope in this epic changes the reader's expectations from the *Chanson de Roland.* While fainting is a narrative technique that an author may or may not choose to employ, the author of the *Chanson d'Antioche* uses the motif both to illustrate difference and to show weakness in the Saracen army.

However, the Saracens do not faint every time they are upset,[42] but as we have seen, the author employs the motif to emphasize key scenes and emotions. In other instances of anger or distress, the text repeats a common formula for anger by stating, "tel duel a en son cuer le sens quide derver" (v. 9110). This expression of almost losing one's senses frequently describes the emotions of Corbaran, the final Saracen leader who tries to defeat the Christian army. Moreover, just as Altman explains that a text is not strictly dual focus, but may have elements of a single-focus or multi-focus narrative (241), the *Chanson d'Antioche* does not solely use emotional

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[41] While the text provides many examples, some include: women are so distraught that their men are going to battle that they regret being born (v. 836-837); the French soldiers are terrified when they see the approaching Saracen army, but they again become courageous and fight (v. 1292-1294); the entire Christian army is upset, "or sont nostre François coureços et dolant" (v. 6545) after the enemy killed three barons from the Holy Land,; Hugues is so sad after the death of Ouedon that he thinks he will lose his senses, "tel duel a en son cuer le sens quide marir" (v. 8673).

[42] In 9821 verses of *Antioche*, there are fourteen instances of fainting and three trance-like states.

fainting for the Saracen army. Nevertheless, there is still a slight difference in the way the author employs the motif of fainting. The narrator describes a couple of Christian soldiers that faint because of overwhelming emotions. Gui, for example, hears that Christians are dying in battle, faints, rubs his hands, and pulls his hair, "Por le dol qu'il en ot ciet a terre pasmés, / Et quant il se refu de pasmisons levés, / Ses blances mains a torses et ses cevels tires" (v. 7061-7063). This scene shows the dual-focus nature of the text as a Christian faints at the sight of the approaching army, just as Soliman does (v. 2850), but by stating that Gui falls to the ground fainted, this collapse resembles the *planctus* scenes in the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Vie de saint Alexis*. The two scenes of Soliman and Gui's distress in the *Chanson d'Antioche* are therefore similar yet distinct because Soliman's mourning does not take the form of a plaint.

Another example of the author using syncope to show a Christian knight's emotions also provides a realistic aspect of the fierce battle. When Etienne de Blois hears and sees the approaching Saracen army, he enters a trance-like state due to fear, and then fakes a sickness. The text says that he has "grant päor," is "plains de confusion," and does not speak, "Mal ait c'ainc i desist parole ne raison" (v. 5618-5619, 5623). The other characters try to guess what causes his trance-like state, and determine that his pale appearance indicates sickness. Etienne agrees to be carried to a nearby fortress, and then gets off the litter outside the city of Antioch because there is nothing wrong with him. The narrator highlights Etienne's horrible actions by stating that "Car n'avoit point de mal, molt en fist a blamer" (v. 5641), and Etienne does not want the others to know about his cowardly actions. As we will see in Marie de France's *Yonec*, feigning an illness or a state of syncope becomes a means to a goal, and an effective, evasive action to avoid an unwanted situation. In the *Chanson d'Antioche*, the realistic details of the

fearful situation remind the reader of the gravity of the battle. The narrator does not always depict the Christian army as strong and courageous.

Additionally, like the traditional epic and the scenes illustrated in the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Chanson d'Antioche* also uses syncope to show the prowess of the knights. Raimbaut Creton, for example, is a noble, loved knight who fights despite his many injuries. In one dramatic scene, he is swimming through the water while the enemy continues to shoot arrows and throw spears. Due to his injuries, he faints and sinks in the water, "Rainbals Cretons se pasme, si est al fons alés" (v. 3871). As men dive in to save his life, the narrator remarks that he was pale because of all the blood he lost (v. 3887). This scene shows the resilience of Raimbaut and highlights the quality of the soldiers on the Christian side, while also providing realistic medical details about blood loss provoking paleness and fainting.

Medical treatises from as early as the twelfth century aim to explain weakness and collapses after a loss of blood. In her *Causae et curae*, Hildegard de Bingen, notes that a large loss of blood weakens the body, as she explains the use of bloodletting to purge bad humors from the body (142). She also states that people often immediately fall asleep if the veins feel an emptiness of humors and blood because the veins need to rest (267). Raimbaut offers an example of a character that does not die from the blood loss (v. 3885), but becomes discolored and weak, as his body faints.

Similarly to the *Chanson de Roland*, the dual-focus nature of the text allows a thorough comparison of the two opposing camps and highlights why some men faint and others do not. Interestingly, the type of transitions from the multi-focus theory that Altman outlines in the *Theory of Narrative* also applies to the *Chanson d'Antioche* when switching between characters or scenes. The transitions between the two groups can be abrupt instead of the smooth transitions

providing repetition and highlighting parallels often found in a dual-focus text (244-245). For example, at the end of a *laisse,* the narrator says, "Mais nous allons cesser de parler d'eux…Nous allons nous consacrer à Pierre qui avait pris la fuite" (Trans. Guidot, *Antioche* v. 793-794).[43] These "hyperbolic modulations" are common in Chrétien de Troyes and the *Lancelot en prose* (Altman 245). For the most part, *Antioche* contains many important elements of the dual-focus theory that are essential to understanding the crusade battle between the Christians and Saracens. True to the epic genre, this text is male-dominated, yet gives numerous examples of syncope due to emotion. Like *Roland*, fainting in battle due to wounds or famine shows strength and perseverance despite the harsh conditions and suffering. The major difference between the *Chanson d'Antioche* and the *Chanson de Roland* obviously lies in emotional fainting. While in *Roland* emotional fainting is tied to the *planctus* and highlights close relationships, emotional fainting in *Antioche* normally highlights the hopelessness of the men. Charlemagne in *Roland* faints from grief, but his strength is still evident as he gathers his troops and defeats the Saracens. On the other hand, Soliman and Garsion in *Antioche* faint from grief and even anger, yet they cannot recover, and as a result, they abandon themselves to despair. Throughout the High Middle Ages, the paradigm of fainting becomes more complex because syncope reveals extreme emotions, but the ways in which the characters handle their emotions elucidate strengths, weaknesses, and numerous other traits.

Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange

Examples from the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Chanson d'Antioche* show the effective use of the motif of fainting in the *chansons de geste* to depict suffering, illustrate prowess, and portray events realistically. Additionally, the *Chanson de Roland* as a critical point of reference

[43] "Ci le laironmes d'els, … / Si dirons de Pieron qui'n est tornés fuitis" (v. 793-794).

for the paradigm of syncope is evident in the *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange*. This text contains fewer instances of fainting, but injury or distress due to battle are still the major reason for a loss of consciousness. An analysis of the *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange* clarifies syncope's role in revealing ideologies, dramatizing injury and distress, creating suspense, and providing a confessional space. Moreover, comparing different *chansons* in the larger *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange* illustrates the reasons why authors choose to employ the motif of fainting.

The *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange* is a manuscript cycle and partial regrouping of the twenty-three *chansons* that make up the greater *Geste de Garin de Monglane* completed between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries (Boutet 13-14). As Boutet explains, the *chansons de geste* separated into three different *gestes* or cycles at the end of the twelfth century (12): the *Geste du roi* to which the *Chanson de Roland* belongs, the *Geste de Guillaume* or *de Garin de Monglane*, and the *Geste de Doon de Mayence* to which belongs the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon* that closes this chapter. The *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange* contains ten sections[44] in addition to the *Chanson Guillaume* that is not included in the cyclical manuscript (14), and relates the story of three great knights: Guillaume, Vivien, and Rainouart. Notable for his short nose that was cut off in battle, Guillaume is the defender of Louis's kingdom and helps the seemingly unfit king defeat his enemies. The cycle later recounts the childhood and knighthood of Vivien, Guillaume's nephew, and this section contains the most instances of syncope in the *Guillaume d'Orange*, as Vivien shows his prowess in battle and Guillaume laments the destiny of his nephew. Rainouart, a character who instills fear in others, then arrives to help Guillaume secure the city of Orange. In the different *chansons* that make up the *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange*, the motif of syncope is

[44] The ten sections include the *Enfances Guillaume, Couronnement de Louis, Charroi de Nimes, Prise d'Orange, Enfances Vivien, Chevalerie Vivien*, *Aliscans, Bataille Loquifer, Moniage Rainouart, and Moniage Guillaume*.

remarkably absent despite the impossible love of Guillaume and Orable, the battle in which Corsolt cuts off Guillaume's nose, the anger of Guillaume as Louis forgets to include him when he distributes land, Guillaume's tormenting love for Orable that includes descriptions of lovesickness,[45] the despair of Vivien's mother as he goes to fight the Saracens, and intense fighting that usually provides a reason for fainting. Excluding one instance in the *Moniage Guillaume I* in which a monk faints from fear as Guillaume approaches (v. 769), the *chansons* of the *Chevalerie Vivien* and *Aliscans* are the two *chansons* that repeatedly employ fainting to illustrate deep emotions or describe injuries.[46] Both dating from the late twelfth century, the *Chevalerie Vivien* serves as a prologue for *Aliscans* (Boutet 272). It is significant that *Aliscans* is the only section of the cycle to include all three main characters, Guillaume, Vivien, and Rainouart, and as Boutet describes, "c'est autour d'elle que se cristallise la double thématique de l'échec et de la revanche, du drame et des illusions du comique, et que se résume ou se reflète le cycle tout entier" (15). Due to their importance and the prevalence of syncope, this study will focus on the *Chevalerie Vivien* and *Aliscans*.

In the *Chevalerie Vivien*, the paradigm of fainting remains similar to the previous two epics, but further reveals the importance of syncope to the epic genre, as well as the influence of the *Chanson de Roland*. In this text, Vivien becomes a knight and makes a vow to never flee before the Saracens (v. 374-375).[47] As a result, he continues to fight despite the vast,

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[45] In the *Prise d'Orange*, Guillaume states that his love for Orable makes him lose all wisdom. He explains that he cannot sleep, and does not want to eat, drink, put on his armor, get on his horse, or go to church (v. 359-375). The effects of lovesickness will be more thoroughly explained in chapter two of this study.

[46] In his edition of the *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange,* Boutet reproduces excerpts from each *chanson* in the *Cycle* to illustrate the main themes, characters, and plot. While this does not provide an analysis of the cycle in its entirety, it is nevertheless notable that syncope is absent from scenes of intense emotion or injury where it can be expected, and is present in scenes where comparisons with Roland are critical.

[47] All citations from the *Chevalerie Vivien* and *Aliscans* in the *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange* come from Boutet's edition, unless otherwise noted.

approaching Saracen army that causes even the most courageous to become pale (v. 353). The narrator describes Vivien's heroic feats in battle as he attacks many Saracens, as well as his resulting injuries that cause him to faint, "Mais Vivïen ont mort et confondu / Que de ses plaies est si li san[s] corus, / .IIII. fois est li ber pasmé[s] chaüs" (v. 1438-1440).[48] At the beginning of *laisse* 38, the reader sees Vivien awakening in the midst of the fierce battle, "Grans fut l'estor[s], et fors et adureis. / De pamisson est Viviens levés" (v. 1441-1442), and his fellow knights bandaging his fifteen wounds. As Vivien faints four times, the gravity of his wounds is clear, and the author prolongs the delay that the loss of consciousness creates by not showing Vivien regaining consciousness until the next verse. Vivien's body is progressively getting weaker and his repeated fainting helps the reader understands Vivien's comment that his end is near (v. 1449).

In the fierce battle, fainting is ideological and Vivien sacrifices himself by remaining honorable to his vow and refusing to surrender to the Saracens. As only one hundred of ten thousand soldiers remain, the text alludes to Olivier in the *Chanson de Roland* [49] when Vivien says that he cannot see well, "Li oil me troblent, ne voi mie bien cler" (v. 1457), and hits Gautier as a result. Whereas Roland displays his perseverance by his continual fainting and continued action, Vivien explicitly tells Gautier that he is losing a lot of blood and that his heart tells him that he can still fight if he can rest for a moment, "Mais s'un petit estoie reposeis, / Mes cuers me dit ancor ferroie assés" (v. 1477). The resemblances to the *Chanson de Roland* continue, as the uncle hears his nephew's call, the brave knight fights despite his fainting caused by his injuries,

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[48] This citation comes from Terracher's edition to fill in the lacuna left by Boutet.

[49] Olivier's eyesight fades and he almost hits Roland because he cannot see (v. 1991).

and the scene seems desperate awaiting the arrival of the uncle. However, in the *Chevalerie Vivien*, Guillaume and Vivien are reunited before Vivien's death.

Vivien's first loss of consciousness introduces the seriousness of his wounds, and the next scene is full of hyperbole as he is blind, continues to fight, and acts like he has lost his senses. Since Vivien's intestines are spilling out of his abdomen, "Par mi ses plaies sont si boel passei" (v. 1804), and he fights with a furious rage, "con s'il fust forsaneis" (v. 1800), Guillaume does not recognize his nephew and believes that he is a Saracen (*laisse* 49). As they fight and realize that they both are fighting for France, injury and fainting dramatize the scene of mistaken identity. Both men reveal their identities and Guillaume becomes distressed and falls from his horse when he sees Vivien's intestines all around him on the ground. Both men then faint, Guillaume from shock and sadness and Vivien from injury, "De son destrier chiet a terre et chancelle, / Li uns leis l'autre se pasment a la terre"(v. 1870-1871). Emphasizing the spectacle, Guillaume and Vivien lose consciousness together, and the intensity of Guillaume's suffering equals the gravity of Vivien's wounds. As the narrative time pauses, Guillaume awakens to lament the death of his great nephew. Using the memorable scene from the *Chanson de Roland*, the author of the *Chevalerie Vivien* amplifies the drama, and uses a double loss of consciousness to simultaneously illustrate Vivien's extreme condition and his importance.

As is common, a character interrupts Guillaume's *planctus* scene and tells him not mourn. However, Vivien is the one to interject and asks if Guillaume is trying to give a clerk or priest's plaint, "Dist Vivïens: 'Laissiés ester, chaeles! / Est ce or plais ne de clerc ne de prestre?" (v. 1877-1878). Vivien rejects the lament as ridiculous and tells his uncle to put him back on his horse, tie his intestines around the saddle, and let him go to battle, "Vostre merci, remeteis me en ma selle, / Par antor moi me saigniés ma boelle, / Puis me meneis o mi leu de la presse" (v. 1879-

1881). The next *laisse* repeats Vivien's requests and emphasizes his persistent desire to keep his oath. While the hyperbolic details of these scenes seem ridiculous, the motif of syncope, including reawakening and the interrupted mourning, stresses Vivien's ideology and his importance to Guillaume's army. A reader familiar with the *Chanson de Roland* is able to appreciate the comparisons of Vivien and Roland, and predict the outcome of this text.

As the *Chevalerie Vivien* ends, *Aliscans* begins with the epic battle and the same image of Vivien losing his intestines. In this section, syncope becomes a critical means of creating suspense. In *Aliscans*, the author alludes more explicitly to the *Chanson de Roland* by stating that Bertrand's actions on the battlefield took the place of Roland and Olivier in combat (v. 138), as he rushs to help the injured Vivien. This reference alone sets the tone for the text and the reader expects a violent battle, fainting, lamenting, and the death of Vivien. A few lines later, he does in fact lose consciousness, ".III. fois se pasme sor le corant destrier; / Ja chaïst jus ne fuisent li estrier" (v. 150-151). Like Roland,[50] Vivien collapses on his horse, but remains in his saddle, illustrating that his role in battle is not yet over. The text emphasizes his unconsciousness by stating that only the stirrups keep him from falling, and again intensifying the scene, Vivien faints three times on his horse whereas Roland only faints once. Vivien's continuous fainting signals that his death is near, yet delayed, and the pause that syncope creates allows the author to introduce the approaching Saracen army.

Similar to Roland, Vivien is distinct from the other knights in the army. As all the counts are taken prisoner, Vivien fights more ferociously than a leopard or lion (v. 344) until Haucebier, a cruel Saracen knight with a reputation for his size and strength (v. 356), delivers a lethal blow. The narrator states, "Viviens chiet, ou il vausist ou non" (v. 379). While he emphasizes that

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[50] *Roland* v. 2031-2034.

falling is involuntary, it is not clear to the reader if Vivien is unconscious or dead. Further creating suspense, Haucebier arrogantly proclaims that "De cestui pais avon" (v. 380), and Vivien's body is left on the sand. Thinking that he is dead, Haucebier says that Vivien will not be troubling them anymore, and the Saracens leave to fight Guillaume.[51] Since fainting often resembles sleep or death, and creates confusion for the other characters, the author uses the ambiguous state to create tension and to show that the Saracen army is duped. Vivien's unconscious body creates a transition in the text as the Saracen army leaves, but the suspense does not endure for the reader. The very next verse explains that Vivien awakens and stands up, "Li ber se drece quant vient de pamison" (v. 387). It appears that he will continue to fight when he awakens and gets on his horse, but in the next *laisse*, Vivien is lying on the ground bleeding, pale, losing his vision, and confessing (v. 394-401). His end now seems imminent, but the author further extends Vivien's death scene by abruptly transitioning to another character. This transition using a hyperbolic modulation[52] causes more anticipation, as the reader does not see Vivien again for almost three hundred verses when Guillaume finds him lying on the ground.

The elongated death scene is reminiscent of the *Chanson de Roland* as Guillaume finds Vivien under a tree, laments, and faints at the sight of his dying nephew.[53] Following the form of the traditional *planctus* as outlined by Zaal (140-141), Guillaume sees the body, announces that he will lament, prays, speaks to Vivien, and presents external and internal signs of suffering. As he cries and rubs his hands, he faints from his horse, "au duel k'il maine si chaï de Bauchant, / Contre terre se pasm[e]" (v. 720-721). The pause in narrative time allows Guillaume to mourn

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[51] Boutet notes that in the *Chanson de Guillaume* that relates the same episode, the Saracens hide Vivien's body so that the Christian army cannot find it (333). This further stresses that the Saracens think Vivien is dead, not unconscious.

[52] As described at the end of the *Chanson d'Antioche* section, a hyperbolic modulation is a type of transition that is a part of Altman's multi-focus theory, and abruptly changes the topic of narration (245).

[53] *Aliscans* v. 695; *Roland* v. 2375.

and praise his extraordinary nephew, but as he puts his hands on Vivien's chest, he feels his heart beating, "Met ses .II. mains amont sor la forcele, / La vie sent qui el cors li sautele; / Parfont dou cuer sospire" (v. 764-766). Checking for the pulse and other signs of life are more common in the verse and prose romances, yet this is the only mention of the heart or pulse in this study's chosen epics. More precise than Charlemagne thinking Aude to be dead since her body remains limp, Guillaume begins to have hope that Vivien is still alive and speaks directly to him. As he pleads with Vivien to awaken, his distress again overwhelms him and he faints, "Li quens se pasme, tant a son duel mené" (v. 806). When Guillaume awakens for the second time, his reality has changed, and the narrator reveals that Vivien hears his uncle and raises his head (v. 809-810). Guillaume is amazed to find his nephew still alive, but the scene quickly turns to confession since Vivien is weak. Syncope and reawakening supply a confessional space before death, and Vivien awakens long enough to receive communion and confess his sins. Earlier in the text, before being found by Guillaume, Vivien, like Roland, prays to God for forgiveness of his sins. Following the pattern of amplifying the scenes from *Roland*, this extended delay in the narration allows the text to provide additional details of Vivien's confession, as he receives communion and also confesses his sins to Guillaume. Vivien reiterates his vow that the Saracens would not make him draw back further than the length of a lance, yet he admits that he was pushed back farther than this distance. Mentioned both as he begins his conquests and at the end of his life, this vow frames Vivien's knighthood, and is closely surrounded by examples of intense battles and injuries that cause him to lose consciousness. These instances of fainting not only show his valiance as a knight, but the difficulty of keeping the vow under such harsh circumstances.

After Vivien's death, Guillaume's mourning turns to anger as Louis rejects Guillaume and refuses to offer aid in battle. His fainting as a sign of his extreme distress is gone and his anger makes him roll his eyes, gnash his teeth, and shake his head (v. 2493-2495). He is now the knight that instills fear as he upholds his duty to defend Orange. He will defend the city even against its own king Louis, who himself is afraid of Guillaume and becomes pale at his words (v. 2652). *Aliscans* continues for thousands of verses and recounts the story of Rainouart, a Saracen known for his brutality, who works for Louis, converts to Christianity, and helps Guillaume fight. The story ends with the French returning home and Guillaume helping rebuild Orange, still thinking about Vivien (v. 8387).

In both *Aliscans* and the *Chevalerie Vivien* the motif of fainting is mainly a masculine phenomenon, and reveals ideology while it emphasizes greatness.[54] With the help of the allusions to the *Chanson de Roland*, the reader is able to understand syncope's role in the text and anticipate the outcome for Vivien. Scenes of fainting help illustrate the main themes of failure and revenge, along with the drama and comical misunderstandings that Boutet highlights (15), as the amplified and extensive death scenes create intensity and provide instances of mistaken identity. In this scene, Guillaume's attachment to his nephew and distress after his death turn to anger and drive revenge.

Using the motif of fainting as a narrative technique is obviously effective, yet some authors choose not to employ it. The *Chanson de Guillaume* is a text from 1150 that never

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[54] Female characters again play a relatively minor role in the *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange*. The only instance of feminine fainting in the excerpts from the *Cycle* is in *Aliscans* and occurs in Guillaume's sister. Guillaume is angry about Louis's cowardly actions and his unfriendly welcome when Blanchefleur becomes queen. As a result, he seizes his sister by the hair and throws her crown at her feet (v. 2799-2802). She leaves upset and "ens en sa cambre s'en est fuiant tornée, / De la paor chiet à terre pasmée" (v. 2809-2810). Her faint not only shows her fear of her brother, but his extreme brutality and anger. As noted in *Roland* with the roles of Aude and Bramimonde, the female character is minor, yet instrumental in linking the male relationships (Kinoshita 35). Guillaume's anger is directed at the power of France, as he throws the crown at his sister's feet. The power that she represents as Louis's wife and queen incites his anger.

appeared in the larger cycle, but relates the same events as *Aliscans* (Boutet 20, 602). It is notable that characters do not lose consciousness especially during Vivien's death or Guillaume's sadness. Like the *Chevalerie Vivien*, the *Chanson de Guillaume* describes Vivien's bloody body losing its intestines (*laisse* 71), his fifteen wounds (v. 1993), and his oath and confession before his death (*laisse* 133). However the text emphasizes Vivien's prayers to God for continuous strength to fight, and instead of stating that he cannot fail (*Vivien, laisse* 15), Vivien prays for strength to keep his vow (*Guillaume, laisse* 73). At Vivien's death, Guillaume starts to cry, "Veit le Willame, comence a plurer" (v. 2053), and the narrator adds that it is difficult for Guillaume to leave his nephew's body behind because he loves him so much (v. 2070-2071). This assures the reader of Guillaume's distress and affection, but the effect is different from the repeated fainting and spectacle of Vivien's death in *Aliscans*.

In comparing the scene of Vivien's death in *Aliscans* and the *Chanson de Guillaume*, the authors' use of the motif of fainting changes the scene's emphasis. By not using syncope, the text focuses on Vivien's prayers and the force he receives from God, rather than his own personal strength to continue despite his injuries. On the other hand, there is less of an emphasis on Vivien's character, as Guillaume cries and then continues the battle after Vivien's death. The spectacle of Vivien's death in *Aliscans* redirects the reader's attention and insists on Vivien's importance, much like the death scene in the *Chanson de Roland*. Guillaume's lengthy mourning, while often exaggerated, highlights Vivien's character and the devastating void left after his death. The narrators' intents are thus different, and the *Aliscans* has a greater focus on emotions than the *Chanson de Guillaume* in these scenes.

Chanson de Girart de Roussillon

Texts begin to focus more on emotions as the *planctus* scenes become amplified. While battle scenes of the epics such as *Roland* and the *Chanson d'Antioche* describe the violent actions of the knights, they become less dominant in the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*, and the words and emotions of the characters take a larger role. In his analysis of Berthe in *Girart*, Alain Labbé explains that the poet added "la psychologie des personnages" to the narration (320). As the psychological aspect of the characters becomes increasingly important in the twelfth-century romances, the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon* is a logical way to end this first chapter because it is a *chanson de geste*, containing some elements similar to hagiographical texts, while also giving a larger importance to the interior emotions and interactions of the characters. *Girart* provides a couple of instances of men falling in battle from injury or being paralyzed with fear,[55] but the author does not use the motif of fainting with the verb "pasmer" until the last quarter of the text. Moreover these instances are strictly due to emotion, and primarily occur in the female character, Berthe. Feminine fainting is prominent, as Berthe's role is larger than the other women's roles in the *chansons de geste.*

Dating between 1135-1180 (Combarieu du Grès 8), this epic recounts the battles of Charles and his vassal Girart who fight over women and land. The emperor gives his daughter, Berthe, to Charles and his other daughter, Elissent, to Girart, but due to the discontentedness of Charles, Girart marries Berthe in exchange for land. Charles does not keep his promises, covets what Girart possesses, and a series of battles begin. As the narrator states, "Carles comence gerre

[55] Belfadieu (v. 1697) enters a trance-like state of fear when he sees Girart approach / Boson, comrade of Girart, and Hugues, his enemy, attack each other in battle and "restet en fol" (v. 3489) / Rainier, fighting for Girart, is injured in battle, on the ground, and must regain his senses (v. 5109-5110).

c'a loin define" (v. 1030).[56] Despite the fierce battles, both men are arrogant and refuse to yield. A truce of five years, and even a brief friendship, occur when Girart helps Charles defeat an invading enemy (*laisse* 200), but when Boson, one of Girart's comrades, kills Thierry and his sons, the battle recommences because Girart receives the blame. Charles eventually defeats Girart and takes Roussillon, and Girart begins a life of penitence for twenty-two years with his wife Berthe at his side. Labbé describes Berthe's devotion to her husband as "la plus belle image que la littérature du Moyen Age ait donnée de l'amour conjugal" (327). After years of poverty, Elissent later helps the couple return to Roussillon where peace is established under the orders of the pope, Girart renounces war, and decides to serve God. In the end Berthe continues to be a pious example, as she meets a pilgrim, gives charity, and helps build a monastery.

As the reader might expect of a *chanson de geste,* the battle scenes are violent and the narration alternates between scenes of the two camps. Unlike the *chansons de geste* that belong to the *Geste du Roi,* such as the *Chanson de Roland* that shows allegiance to Charlemagne, and alternates between the Christians and the Saracens, the dual-focus narrative is more internal in the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*. This epic belongs to the *Geste de Doon de Mayence*, or the "geste des barons révoltés" (Combarieu du Grès 7), and the text alternates between Charles and his vassal, Girart. Charles's treachery and his broken promises cause Girart to revolt and the two begin a long civil war. While Charles is at fault, and "rompt le fragile équilibre que le monde épique cherche à instaurer entre pouvoir monarchique et pouvoir feodo-vassalique" by insisting on his own desires (Combarieu du Grès 23), the immoderation of Girart is visible as he refuses to listen to his counselors and yield. Moreover, in *Girart* the alternating narration in battle highlights the negative aspects of both Girart and Charles, even though they are both skilled,

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[56] All citations come from Micheline de Combarieu deu Grès and Gérard Gouiran's edition.

strong knights. The poet does not use the motif of fainting to insist on their prowess because the reader receives the impression that the actions of both men are unjust.

War is seen as without end, as the narrator says, "Ci comence l'orguels e la fulie / Qui non fera ojan liument fenie" (v. 720-721). The futility of war and the roles of women and emotions are also present in the contemporary *Roman de Thèbes* that we will examine in the next chapter. Since *Girart* is a *chanson de geste*, the theme of war is prominent, but the similarities to the romances like the *Roman de Thèbes* are visible due to Berthe's importance and the continual mention of the long war between Girart and Charles and its consequences. Moreover, the incessant wars illustrate "la fragilité de la paix" and the difficulty of stopping war (Combarieu du Grès 13). Men and women cry and lament (v. 3187-3188), the battle is fierce, the narrator illustrates the decapitated bodies and bloody battlefield, and even Charles states that his heart is full of distress (v. 3166). Suffering is evident, but the descriptions of the battles and their frequency are different, as the motif of fainting shifts away from the battlefield. Missing are the visual scenes with descriptions of fainting characters delaying the action and then reawakening to a different or even the same reality. By not delaying the narration in battle with instances of syncope, the author does not give such extensive focus to the knights' prowess.

Specific and lengthy, detailed battle descriptions are also not common. The poet states that if he describes every part of the battle and everyone's exploits, the text would take too long to recount, "Si nonmava toz ces qui unt jostat, / E contava cascun con se convat, / on aurie deman dit la meitat" (v. 5920-5922). He uses a sort of literary syncope, as he cuts his narration short in order to redirect the reader's attention to other details. He extends narrated time by stating how much time has passed, but accelerates the time of narration. Chrétien de Troyes also uses this technique in *Erec et Enide* in order to skip more minor details and focus on what he

deems important. Nevertheless, in *Girart* the descriptions of battles occupy the first 7,500 verses, and the five-year truce that pauses the war, only lasts for a few verses (Combarieu du Grès 11). The reader knows that the poet accelerates certain episodes of the war, yet the continuous, extended sections of battles continue for most of the text. The poet thus plays with the narrative time in order to emphasize the war's duration.[57] Combarieu du Grès further explains the author's style by showing that "ces morceaux de bravoure que sont, littéralement, les récits de batailles épiques n'intéressent guère le poète de *Girart* […] Il met l'accent sur la parole plus que sur l'action, sur le « conseil » plus que sur l' « aide », sur la raison des faits plus que sur les faits eux-mêmes" (12-13). From the beginning counselors, such as the pope and family members, persuade Girart to marry Berthe instead of Elissent, and messengers, barons, friends, and counselors on both sides try in vain to convince Girart and Charles of the futility of battle. Much of the text contains negotiations and advice.

The narrative technique changes after Girart's second defeat and the capture of Roussillon. This section, occupying the final 2,800 verses, differs from the first two-thirds of the text, as the author redirects attention to scenes of emotional distress. Charles's victory is too overwhelming for Girart, who faints several times while fleeing to Besançon, "Tal dol en a au cor, per tot s'en sent; / Sobre(e)l col del chaval pasme sovent" (v. 7161-7162). This loss of consciousness begins to slow the narration as the narrator transitions from scenes of battle to Girart's long period of penitence. Like Roland and Vivien, Girart remains on his horse despite his continual fainting, but his horse leads him away from his city and distances him from his life as a knight. Immediately following, Berthe is praying for Girart and a messenger arrives with the

[57] In his article, "La Comtesse Berthe dans *Girart de Roussillon*: 'L'Amour et la vie d'une femme,'" Alain Labbé gives another analysis of the slowing narrative time due to the role of both women, Berthe and Elissent. While the men seem stuck in the repetitious battles, Berthe and Elissent drive the narration and bring about peace (329).

news, causing her to lose consciousness, “E quant la donne l’ot, pasmade estent” (v. 7193). Fainting again creates a delay in the narration, as the next *laisse* reiterates her faint, and adds the extra detail that she fainted on the blue marble floor, “la donne se pasmet soz marbre blau” (v. 7194). The narrator explains that Berthe’s heart is broken due to the treason, and she immediately leaves for Besançon to find her husband. Syncope produces a dramatic effect by emphasizing the overwhelming emotions, the defeat of Girart, and the treason of the men helping Charles. The tone of anger and revenge changes to distress and hopelessness, and the fainting represents Girart’s defeat and serves as a transitional marker in the text.

As Charles and his men continue to chase Girart, he and his wife barely escape to a hermitage, where the hermit explains that Girart’s sin of pride causes his trouble and that Girart must abandon his bitterness and desire for revenge in order to be forgiven (*laisses* 522-523). Syncope plays an essential role in this transition, and signals a drastic change in Girart’s life, since it highlights loss and emphasizes the extreme suffering and penitence he must undergo. The narrator explains that God did a miracle for Girart because he would have never changed his life if he had not lost everything (v. 7670-7673). Fainting depicts Girart’s loss and his awakening to change. While the trope becomes prominent in Chrétien de Troyes and the *Lancelot en prose*, this is the first mention in the chosen texts of this study of fainting highlighting sin. Emphasizing the couple’s suffering, sickness, poverty, and continual movement to hide from Charles, one host throws them out in the mud, and Berthe faints from distress, “Quant furent chaagut andui el brac, / Aiqui pasmet la donne de dol que ac” (v. 7650-7651). This dramatizes their helplessness, but also serves as a narrative prosthesis when a man sees her faint in the mud, takes pity on the couple, and gives them food and lodging. Combarieu du Grès explains that *Girart* is a text in which the hero takes a long period of time to become self-aware. She continues that “seule, la

misère la plus extrême, visiblement manifestée à ce tempérament plus sensuel qu'intellectuel par le dépouillement des biens matériels et des honneurs sociaux, l'amènera, par un brusque retour sur lui-même, à considérer Dieu" (24). During this period, although also in great distress, Berthe serves as a godly example for Girart as she reads him the Bible, for example (v. 7667-7668). Berthe is a woman "tournée vers la vie intérieure, réflexive au contraire et capable toujours, dans les peines et les deuils qui ne lui manqueront pas, d'imposer à la douleur la ferveur du dépassement" (Labbé 323). In spite of her extreme suffering, as represented in her fainting, Berthe does not despair, but helps guide Girart in his penitence.

After living twenty-two years in exile, Berthe sees jousting knights and mourns her husband's former life. Berthe does not only suffer for herself, but for Girart's past knightly valor (Labbé 326),[58] and she takes the initiative to return to France. Elissent helps restore Berthe and Girart by tricking Charles, and a seven-year truce, which again only occupies a few verses in the text, seems to establish peace. However, the men easily fall back into their old pride. As the war restarts, Girart's son dies, causing extreme suffering that results in Berthe's complete collapse, "Ne pot ses curs suffrir ne sostener; / Vuelge u non, l'aven de dol cader" (v. 9181-9182). While the poet uses the verb "cader" instead of the usual "pasmer," it is evident that Berthe loses consciousness, as her heart cannot bear the news and her fall is involuntary. As Girart helps her sit up, he tells her not to abandon herself to mourning. Contrary to the motif of the mourning mother as in the *Vie de saint Alexis*, there is not a *planctus* scene, but Berthe gets up and submits to God's will. She states that since it was not God's will that their son live, they will give God their heritage instead of keeping it for themselves (v. 9183-9188). Again serving as an example, Berthe "sait cette fois encore orienter positivement la souffrance et en quelque sorte y prendre

[58] Labbé also signals the relationship between Berthe crying about her husband's former glory and the scene in Chrétien de Troyes's *Erec et Enide* in which Enide mourns the *recreantise* of her husband (326).

appui pour gravir un degré de plus dans la voie tracée par sa foi de parfaite chrétienne" (Labbé 328).

The role of Berthe is critical in this last section, as she becomes Girart's counselor and helps lead him in his repentance. The narrator explains Berthe's important role by saying that in the midst of his suffering Girart would not survive without Berthe, "Entre lo dol e l'ire e lo mautraire, / Si non fuss a mullers, non visquest gaire" (v. 7586-7587). Despite the horrible conditions, she remains faithful, and Girart heeds her advice, as opposed to that of the many counselors during the civil war. The last section of the text focuses on Girart's morality, and Berthe "fait le lien entre épopée et vie de saint; c'est par elle que Girart va accéder à la sainteté et que *Girart de Roussillon* prend une dimension doublement hagiographique" (Combarieu 20). Like a hagiographical text, Berthe's life becomes the example of piety. Her fainting highlights the suffering and her faithfulness to God, as she does not waver in her faith. In the end, her visions and charitable acts further show her as an example to others (*laisse* 645), especially Girart who finally renounces war and devotes his life to God.

Conclusion

As seen in these hagiographical texts and the epics, a pattern develops as the authors employ syncope with a narrative function. While the use and function of fainting varies depending on the poet, a loss of consciousness effectively slows the narration and allows the author to focus on a desired scene or character. Syncope is not exclusively masculine or feminine, yet masculine fainting is more prevalent in the epic battlefield scenes, and feminine fainting due to devastating news.

Before continuing to the twelfth-century romances, it is also interesting to note the change in language as different authors describe instances of fainting. In the *Vie de saint Alexis*, the authors generally employ "chiet pasmée" to convey that someone faints and it is often added that the character falls "a tere." In the *Chanson de Roland*, instead of using the adjectival form, the poet conjugates the verb "se pasmer." Twice it is noted that words cause Roland to faint on his horse (v. 1988-1989, 2031), once he falls "a tere" (v. 2220), and once he faints "sur l'erbe," (v. 2270, 2273). While the collective faints also note that the men fall to the ground, "encuntre tere se pasment" (v. 2416, 2422), and "s'en pasment cuntre tere" (v. 2932), Marsile and Charlemagne both "se pasmet" (v. 2575, v. 2880, 2891). The noun "pasmeisuns" (v. 2036, 2233, 2892) also appears in the *Chanson de Roland*, as the author notes when a character recovers from a fainting spell, "De pasmeisuns guariz ne revenuz" (v. 2036). Although the noun is less common in the epics, it is frequent in the verse and prose romances as descriptions of the fainted characters, reactions of other characters, and the events surrounding syncope increase.

In the twelfth century, the use of the verb "pasmer" is frequent in the *chansons de geste*, including the *Chanson d'Antioche*. A similar expression of falling to the floor fainted, for example, occurs when Gui hears that Christians are dying in battle (v. 7061), and the language reminds the reader of fainting in the earlier epics. The *Chanson d'Antioche* is also notable for mentioning how many times a character loses consciousness, traditionally using the number four. The *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange* also uses the noun "pamisson" (*Chevalerie Vivien* v. 1442) or "pamison" (*Aliscans* v. 387), and similar to the earlier epics, shows that characters fall completely to the ground, "li uns leis l'autre se pasment a la terre" (*Chevalerie Vivien* v. 1871), "contre terre se pasm[e]" (*Aliscans* v. 721), and "chiet à terre pasmée" (*Aliscans* v. 2810). "Pasmer" is again used as a conjugated verb, "le quens se pasme" (*Aliscans* v. 806), or as an

adjective, “tout pasmé” (*Moniage Guillaume* v. 769). Additionally, like the *Chanson d’Antioche*, the number of times that a character faints is listed as Vivien, “.III. fois se pasme sor le corant destrier” (*Aliscans* v. 150). While fainting is less common in the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*, the narrator employs the verb “pasmer” to describe actual fainting, including Girart falling on his horse, “Sobre(e)l col del chaval pasme sovent” (v. 7162), or the adjectival form, “pasmade estent” (v.7193). A few other expressions imply a loss of consciousness, such as “restet en fol” (v. 3489) or “l’aven de dol cader” (v. 9182).

All of these examples are remarkably similar, and “pasmer” is the main verb describing a loss of consciousness, but the surrounding details of the collapse extend the paradigm of fainting. Beginning with *Alexis* and subsequently visible in *Girart*, fainting emphasizes the devastating loss felt by a mother who loses her son. The expression of emotions after a loss extends to the battlefield, as fainting is an essential element of the *planctus* scenes in *Roland, Gilles,* and the *Cycle de Guillaume d’Orange*. Syncope also creates a confessional space, as dying knights awaken to pray before their deaths, as visible in Aliscans’s death in the *Chanson de Guillaume d’Orange*. In hagiography, fainting serves as a transitional marker when saints depart, or as a transition to penitence in the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*. Externalized emotions resulting in fainting also cause other characters to interject and state that emotions should be controlled. For example, the pope interjects in *Alexis* and insists on the necessity of faith, the narrator in the *Vie de saint Gilles* states that distress will not bring Gilles back, Charlemagne is told to stop his mourning and bury the dead in the *Chanson de Roland*, and the Saracen leaders insist that their actions are justified as they are told not to abandon themselves to despair. In the epics, the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Chanson d’Antioche*, and the *Chanson de Guillaume d’Orange*, fainting reveals the ideology of the knights who would rather sacrifice themselves than break their feudal

code, as well as being a textual marker that illustrates the dual-focus nature of the texts and the differences between the Christians and the Saracens. As we have seen in the later versions of *Alexis*, the *Chanson de Guillaume d'Orange*, and the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*, some texts use the motif of fainting more frequently than others, either to elucidate different emotions or highlight specific characters or themes. As *Girart de Roussillon* begins to illustrate, the use of fainting increases as the description of emotions becomes more elaborate, and this shift will continue with texts focusing on love in the courtly romances. Throughout the literature of the High Middle Ages, these hagiographical texts and *chansons de geste* serve as important points of reference in order to understand the increased use of fainting in the verse and prose romances.

Chapter Two: From Distress to Love:

Emotional Syncope in the Twelfth-Century Verse Romances

As seen in the hagiographical texts and feudal epics from the twelfth century, the use of the motif of fainting gradually becomes more prominent, especially with the increased focus on the expression of love. Similar to hagiography and the epics, the twelfth-century verse romances present instances of masculine fainting on the battlefield or women losing consciousness due to devastating news, yet love, instead of knightly heroics or feudal or saintly devotion, is the central theme, and vivid and detailed descriptions allow the reader to better understand the intense emotions of the characters. As we saw in the first chapter, syncope serves as a dividing marker between two groups of people. While this distinction is prominent in the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Chanson d'Antioche*, fainting as a boundary marker becomes less obvious in the verse romances, as men and women with diverse ideologies and on both sides in battle lose consciousness. In the twelfth-century verse romances, fainting more commonly defines individual emotions and characteristics rather than entire groups. Other elements of the feudal epics remain, with fainting as a confessional space before death and as an essential part of the *planctus*. Furthermore, interjections continue to show the futility of distress, and episodes of fainting highlight characters and ideologies. However, differences are visible, and the paradigm of syncope continues to evolve. Instances provide a space for forgiveness between characters, groups of women, instead of men, faint in unison, syncope is a sign of lovesickness, and the bodily effects of a loss of consciousness are more thoroughly described.

In order to illustrate the broad range of syncope in the twelfth-century verse romances, this chapter will analyze the diverse narrative functions in two *romans d'antiquité*, the *Roman de Thèbes* and the *Roman d'Enéas*, *Pyrame et Thisbé*, and the *Lais* of Marie de France. While

battlefield scenes are important, the *Roman de Thèbes* adds to the paradigm of fainting by introducing the ideas of lovesickness. *Pyrame et Thisbé* accentuates the overwhelming effects of love that dominate the characters of the *Roman d'Enéas*. In this romance, fainting is both a sign and symptom of lovesickness that unveils inner emotions and compels characters to act. Finally, in the *Lais* of Marie de France, love generates diverse emotions and characters handle their symptoms. Throughout these works, as major themes begin to shift from the epics to courtly romances, the narrative functions of fainting transform and redirect attention to the theme of love.

Roman de Thèbes

The *Roman de Thèbes* from 1150 is the first of the *romans d'antiquité* and is an essential text in this study as it illustrates the transition from the *chanson de geste* to the courtly romance. Modeling his romance after the *Thebaid* by Statius, the anonymous author of the *Roman de Thèbes* aims to make the text more accessible by placing the classical work in the feudal world of the twelfth century and using elements of the *chanson de geste* (Mora-Lebrun 15). While not exactly a *chanson de geste*, many similar characteristics allow for parallel uses of the motif of fainting, including the comparisons of Tydée, a warrior in Polynice's army, to Roland in the *Chanson de Roland*. Characters die in battle, *planctus* scenes with fainting from distress are common, and battle scenes describing fainting on horses or group faints remind readers of *Roland*. As expected, rival armies engage in battle, but *Thèbes* is not entirely a dual-focus text. The lines between the two groups are blurred, as fainting occurs frequently on both sides and does not distinguish one group from the other. Moreover, characters often belong to both groups, such as Ismène, Antigone, and Jocaste, and even though the two brothers fight over a contested

space, they struggle for power instead of clashing over distinct religious ideologies. There are variations in the pattern of syncope in the *Roman de Thèbes*, as characters reawaken to reproach others, and groups of women, instead of armies of men, lose consciousness.

The *Roman de Thèbes* begins with the tale of Oedipus who kills his father, Laius, and marries his mother, Jocaste. Oedipus's two sons, Polynice and Étéocle, then fight over the kingdom, and years of war ensue because Étéocle breaks his oath to share the kingdom with his brother. In exile, Polynice seeks refuge with Adraste, king of the Greeks, meets the banished Tydée, and marries Adraste's daughter. King Adraste and Tydée fight to help Polynice regain his land, but the stubbornness of both brothers and the strength of the armies prevent the war from ending. Jocaste tries in vain to persuade her sons to resolve the conflict, and both sons eventually fight to the death.

Episodes of fainting abound in the battle scenes and help illustrate two of the main themes of this text, the futility of battle and the love of the knights and their ladies. As we have seen with the roles of Aude in *Roland*, the epics do not commonly give a large role to women, even though Berthe's role in the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon* becomes more prominent as she counsels her husband. The *Roman de Thèbes* further distinguishes itself from the *chansons de geste* by developing love relationships within enemy camps, and including women in decisive moments in battle (Mora-Lebrun 27). In *Thèbes* and continuing in other verse romances, the poets do not focus solely on war, but include more women protagonists and insert descriptions of love and emotions.

From the beginning of the *Roman de Thèbes*, the author uses the motif of fainting to set the tone of the romance and evoke pity. Using a *planctus* and the motif of the mourning mother, the text opens with Laius ordering his son Oedipus to be killed, and Jocaste displaying every

external sign of distress. After hearing the news, she cries, moans, twists her hands, pulls her hair, and faints on her child, "La miere plore et crie et brait, / ses poins detort, sez chevelz trait, / pasmé chiet sur son enfant" (v. 53-55).[59] The expression "pasmé chiet" further emphasizes the motif and Jocaste's utter devastation that causes her to faint, lament, and as a result, sleep from exhaustion, "la miere est lasse, si s'endort, / et ses filz vait receivre mort" (v. 99-100). While her unconsciousness and sleep resemble each other in appearance, they also both pause the reality that she faces. However, neither action stops Laius's order, as Oedipus is taken away during the pause in narrative action surrounding Jocaste. While the *Thebaid* does not mention Jocaste's mourning, or the relationship of Jocaste and Laius (Jones, *Theme* 19), the twelfth-century poet of *Thèbes* uses the additional details depicting the mother's emotions to focus the narration on distress and evoke pity for Jocaste, and Oedipus, in spite of the horrendous acts he will commit. The focus on Jocaste reflects the twelfth-century literature's greater interest on female characters and expression of emotions.[60]

The emotional toll then continues as Oedipus survives, kills his father, and unknowingly marries his mother. However, the narrator leaves Oedipus in his misery after he and Jocaste discover the truth, and focuses on the fighting between his sons, Étéocle and Polynice. In exile, Polynice meets the also exiled Tydée, and both men serve King Adraste and marry his daughters. When Étéocle hears about his brother's marriage and newly acquired land, he refuses to share the kingdom, and the battle becomes inevitable. Adraste and Tydée fight with Polynice, and from the first battle scene, descriptions in *Thèbes* resemble the *chansons de geste* with the mention of

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[59] All citations come from Mora-Lebrun's edition.

[60] All references to Jones in chapter two come from Rosemarie Jones's *The Theme of Love in the* Romans d'antiquité. In her book, Jones explains many of the differences between the *Thebaid* and the *Roman de Thèbes* that show these adaptations. Notable differences include the *Thebaid*'s greater focus on guilt and Jocaste's incestuous marriage, whereas Jocaste in *Thèbes* is more of a courtly model (20).

violent sword fighting, great losses of blood, the knights' fear of dishonor, and pleas to maintain courage. Furthermore, the poet compares Tydée's superior strength to Roland, "de proece semble Rollant" (v. 833) and "colps done merveillous et granz; / onc ne dona meillors Rollanz" (v. 1788-1789). Tydée's injuries cause his wife to mourn and become pale, but unlike Roland, fainting does not emphasize his great character or his importance to the army.

Instead of using the motif of fainting to emphasize greatness in battle, instances in the *Roman de Thèbes* highlight the inevitability and vainness of the battle between Polynice and Étéocle. For example, the sole survivor of a battle arrives before King Étéocle, says that the day of his birth is cursed (v. 1962), and faints from distress, "Poi sot tiel doel qu'il pasma; / quant fu relevez, si parla" (v. 1963-1964). Although brief, the messenger's loss of consciousness creates a pause in the narration as the reader and Étéocle await the bad news. The messenger then awakens to recount and praise the valiant efforts of Tydée, and tell Étéocle that he was wrong to begin the war. In anger, Étéocle orders the messenger to be killed, but the messenger commits suicide because he says Étéocle is not worthy to kill him since the valiant Tydée let him live. The spectacle of fainting creates a transition in the text and prepares the battle between Étéocle and Polynice that will continue throughout the romance. This scene gives a slight advantage to the army of Polynice, as the messenger praises Tydée's strength. Again showing resemblances to the *chansons de geste* and a dual-focus text, the narrator seems to prefer one group to the other. While Jean-Charles Payen suggests a closer reading with crusade literature, and the side of Polynice representing the West and the side of Étéocle representing the East (502; qtd. in Mora-Lebrun 18), Mora-Lebrun states that the poet of the *Roman de Thèbes* only uses a similar writing technique as the *chansons de geste* in order to depict the brothers as enemies (18-19). These evident similarities in style allow the reader to understand the emotion and distress of battle, and

the messenger's loss of consciousness marks the strength of Polynice's army and the beginning of the war.

The devastation and hardship of war are immediately visible as Adraste's army suffers from thirst because of the drought. Their hardships further create a link with the epics, and remind the reader of the *Chanson d'Antioche* in which the knights suffer from starvation. As the men search for water, they find a young lady, Isiphile, who is watching King Lycurgue's baby boy. Her fear of the approaching knights almost makes her lose her senses, "Reguarda sei, si vit les rens: / por poi qu'ele ne perdit les sens" (v. 2272-2273), and she is afraid to leave the boy in order to show them the river. Yet the knights, promising to act honorably and nobly, follow Isiphile and rejoice at the sight of the water. When they realize that a serpent killed the king's son, Capanée acts courteously as he states that he will defend the lady and avenge the boy's death since he had promised to protect her (v. 2334-2335). This scene shows elements of the courtly romances as the knights serve their lady. Rosemarie Jones states that there is an atmosphere of courtliness in *Thèbes* and that in contrast to the *Thebaid*, the poet depicts Isiphile as a beautiful young lady instead of an old woman with children, and refers to her as a *douce amie* (Jones 27). These elements of courtliness distinguish *Thèbes* from the *chansons de geste* by showing the increased interest in love relationships.

In the next scene, Isiphile doubts the knights' ability to avenge the boy's death since the enemy is a giant serpent, and her reaction is unexpected when they manage to succeed. Picking up the boy, she realizes he is dead, and faints twice, "quant n'i sent mais fume n'aleine, / desur l'enfant deux feiz se pasme" (v. 2576-2577).[61] As she awakens to regret her birth and says she

[61] Interestingly, the motif of the mourning mother often occurs due to the loss of a son, but the *Roman de Thèbes* gives two instances of mourning after the loss of a baby boy, with Jocaste thinking she has lost her baby, Oedipus, and here with Isiphile losing the King's baby boy. The only other instance of fainting after the loss of a baby in the chosen texts of this study occurs in the *Lancelot en prose* when Queen Helen loses baby Lancelot.

deserves death, the *planctus* scene resembles the mourning mother from the *Vie de saint Alexis*. However Isiphile's fainting after the death of the baby boy that she called her "beals douz amys" (v. 2481), represents her own fear of approaching punishment and death. Even though this loss of consciousness seemingly performs a familiar function of fainting in a *planctus*, Isiphile seems to focus more on herself than the boy. With the knights' concern of serving their lady and Isiphile's mourning, this scene shows greater similarities to the courtly romances.

However, the mourning at the castle of King Lycurgue again resembles the *planctus* scenes in hagiography and the epics. As Adraste and his army arrive at court to plead for Isiphile's protection, a messenger announces the boy's death. The narrator states that King Lycurgue changes color, is so upset that he almost falls, "pour un poi qu'il ne chaït" (v. 2694), and desires revenge. Upon hearing the news, the queen becomes pale, and falls fainted, "quant la novele parentent, / pasmé chiet el pavement" (v. 2707-2708). This instance follows the motif of the mourning mother and further details depict the queen falling backwards, "ariere chiet" (v. 2710), and awakening to wring her hands and continue her lament. The sight of her dead son provokes such mourning that barons must pull her and her husband away from the body. The narrator mentions the burial, the pardon that Isiphile receives from King Lycurgue, and that the mourning lasts for three days (v. 2759-2760), but the scene leaves the family in distress as it transitions to the Greeks continuing the battle with the army of Thèbes.

This scene with Isiphile shifts the motif of fainting and uses it as an element of courtly love, as Isiphile's faint deepens the knights' devotion to their lady and leads them to plead for her life before the king. Jones explains, the *Roman de Thèbes* does not provide a "full-length love-story" as the *Roman d'Enéas* will, but the *chansons de geste* influence the love relationships, and the "life and social code of the mid-twelfth century" (Jones 28) are visible.

The *Roman de Thèbes* is at a transitional point between the *chansons de geste* and the courtly romances because the roles of women are becoming more common, and details of love are more evident, but war, as in the *chansons de geste*, still drives the plot. With the increasing influence of women, emotions, and scenes of love, the motif of fainting continues to present itself in varied forms.

One of these new varied forms occurs as the Greek army meets an old lady guarding a large tower. This lady resembles a hideous monster and tells the men that they must solve the riddle or die. When she gives the same riddle that Oedipus solves earlier in the text, Tydée answers easily, and the old woman falls fainted making a noise louder than the sound of two oak trees hitting the ground, "la vielle l'ot, si chiet pasmé, / desur le marbre s'est crevé; / ses dous chesnes y cheïssant, / ja maior crois ne donassant" (v. 2967-2970). More than adding a humorous description of how hard the woman falls to ridicule her, this brief scene uses fainting to allow the knights to pass without problem. Repeating the words of the old lady who says that whoever would want to pass "morir l'estuet ou deviner; / a deviner ou a morir / ou a veeir ou a chosir" (v. 2922-2924), the narrator says that the men were able to pass "sanz morir et sanz deviner, / sanz deviner et sanz morir, / et sanz veeir et sanz choisir" (v. 2972-2974). Syncope facilitates the passage of the knights by silencing the old lady, and the scene switches to the knights arriving at Étéocle's Monflor castle. Fainting provides an interesting transition, and the dramatic sound of the old lady's collapse emphasizes the expression "chiet pasmé" that shows the gravity of the moment when shock literally floors her.

With these first few examples of fainting in the *Roman de Thèbes*, it is evident that the author uses the motif of fainting for courtly love and in ways similar to hagiography and the epics with slight adjustments and additions. Patterns become visible when a character regains

consciousness, another character interjects to stop the fainting, or groups of men faint in unison. Additionally, the scenes that focus solely on love illustrate a change in narrative focus that is even more apparent in courtly romance.

As we have seen, characters often regain consciousness only to faint again because of the devastating reality, or can be compelled to act. Visible with Roland in the *Chanson de Roland* or Vivien in the *Chanson de Guillaume d'Orange*, fainting also offers a confessional space before death. In important battle scenes, the *Roman de Thèbes* expands these uses of the motif, and Atys's death offers an interesting twist on a knight's confession. Atys, a young knight fighting for Thèbes and engaged to be married to Jocaste's daughter Ismène, attacks Tydée in battle. Tydée is forced to fight the young, disarmed Atys, and causes him to fall wounded from his horse. Atys faints from pain, "ates de l'angoisse se pasme" (v. 6717), but instead of confessing his sins when he awakens, he forgives Tydée for killing him, "quant il revient, forment se blasme, / a celui pardone sa mort: / bien set qu'il n'i aveit nul tort" (v. 6718-6720). He further states that he receives comfort because a great knight worth one hundred warriors kills him. The confessional space widens to man forgiving man, but also emphasizes the war's senselessness as Tydée laments the fact that a young, beautiful knight must die. The two camps are enemies, but death on either side causes heartbreak.

Another fainting and dying warrior in *Thèbes* also expands the confessional space after a loss of consciousness. Étéocle decides to fight without armor in order to impress his love, Salemandre, the daughter of Daire le Roux.[62] He takes two knights, Alexandre and Dryas, with him and they meet Parthenopée, a warrior fighting for the Greeks and engaged to be married to Jocaste's daughter, Antigone. In order to have an evenly matched fight, Dryas must watch as

[62] Rosemarie Jones says that the characters of Daire le Roux and Salemandre are inventions of the French poet, who appears to have added the relationship of Étéocle and Salemandre to "cater for a growing interest in love stories among the public, or perhaps to show Etiocles in a slightly more favourable light" (26).

Étéocle and Alexandre fight Parthenopée and his knight, Dorcée. Disobeying orders twice, Dryas enters the battle and then delivers a fatal blow to Parthenopée, who lies bleeding, loses his color, and faints from pain, "descolouré out cil la face; / cil out perdue la colour, / si se pasme de la dolour" (v. 11042-11044). Upon seeing the fainting, dying Parthenopée, Étéocle knows that Dryas has ruined his war strategy, and laments the death of a great knight who could have helped end the war. In contrast to Atys who pardons his killer, Parthenopée does not forgive, but awakens to see Étéocle crying and increases his guilt by emphasizing the missed opportunity, "Pesir, fait il, vous deit de mei, / car jeo vous die en dreit fei / de la guerre feïsse paie, / si fusse pris sanz mortel plaie" (v. 11073-11076). In his reproach of the king, Parthenopée emphasizes his own worth as a knight, and his loss of consciousness creates a pause in the narrative time to emphasize the poet's feelings on the war. Instead of praising the greatness of a warrior and the resulting loss to an army as is common in the *chansons de geste*, this scene accentuates regret. The poet uses the feudal elements and war strategies in combination with the emphasis on emotions to show another senseless death and another missed opportunity to end the war.

Parthenopée's worth is again visible as his comrade, Dorcée, loses consciousness, "sur lui se pasme Dorceüs, / plore et fait doel, il ne poet plus" (v. 11085-11086). Fainting at the sight of a dying comrade is common on the battlefield and the knight awakens to praise his fallen friend, but Dorcée's collapse also allows Parthenopée to interject and give Dorcée instructions on how to tell his mother the news. Since he expects his mother to die when she hears, he tells Dorcée to reveal it little by little, "ne te chaut pas ensemble dire; / son grant doel ne li dire ensemble, petit et petit le li emble. / Bien li poez son doel atemprer" (v. 11100-11103). Parthenopée has a basis for his concern for his mother, as he says that when he left for war his mother lay fainted on the ground, "nous partimes en un pré, / tu remansis illoesques pasmé / come cele qui ert esguarré"

(v. 11116-11118). Parthenopée's mother reinforces the image of the fainted mourning mother, and introduces the figure of the distraught mother watching her son leave for battle, which will appear again in Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte du Graal*. The mother's faint illustrates the definitive separation of mother and son. Even though the poet of the *Roman de Thèbes* does not include the anticipated scene of Parthenopée's mother losing consciousness when Dorcée reveals the news of her son's death, the reader is able to understand the intensity of the mourning mother.

Realistic descriptions detail Parthenopée's injuries and death, as he tries to prop himself up on his elbow, reopens his wound, and dies. Dorcée tries to create shade, prop up his friend's head, and fan him, but soon notices the stiffness, coldness, and paleness of the body and knows he is dead, "reddes est et freis come glace; / reddes est, mais sa colour est blanche, / … / dont sout tres bien qu'il est morz" (v. 11176-11177, 11181). Alexandre-Bidon analyzes the clinical signs of death from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries and notes the process of observing the body, and testing the rigidity, temperature, and breathing (164-167). In addition to paleness and fading vision, texts add increasingly realistic detail. Just as the poet in the *Chanson de Guillaume d'Orange* mentions that Guillaume notices Vivien's heart beating, the poet of the *Roman de Thèbes* describes how Dorcée could distinguish between a fainted and dead state.

The mourning surrounding Parthenopée's death pauses the narrated time for roughly one hundred and sixty verses. Étéocle and Alexandre give reactions similar to those in the epics, as they pull their hair and lament, and the narrator then returns to Dorcée, who had fainted and now awakens to lament, "Dorceüs, qui s'esteit pasmez; / de palmeisoun est repairez, / come home desvé sailli en peiz; / son seignor prist a regreter" (v. 11200-11203). The use of the verb "pasmer" in the plus-que parfait is not common, but the poet effectively uses the tense to show that while Dorcée was unconscious, the other men were mourning. Dorcée then awakens to

lament greatly, and his faint and distress serve as a narrative prosthesis, propelling the action, because the men of Thèbes hear the distress, Adraste learns the news, and the war continues.

In addition to showing how fainted characters react after they lose consciousness, hagiographical texts and the epics illustrate that other characters that witness a collapse often state their reactions. The pope in the *Vie de saint Alexis* tells the family to quit lamenting, the narrator in the *Vie de saint Gilles* remarks that crying will not change a situation, and Soliman's son in the *Chanson d'Antioche* reproaches his father for fainting. Characters in the *Roman de Thèbes* act in similar ways, as Antoine, a knight fighting for Thèbes, faints on his horse after witnessing the death of his father, "il se pasme sur son destrer" (v. 4822). His cousin Eustache then tells him that his mourning is worthless because he should seek revenge, "en doel ne veie rien recovrer. / Mais espleitiez del bien vengier" (v. 4827-4828). Eustache urges action because fainting cannot change the circumstances. The characters' reactions to fainting suggest that certain behaviors are not appropriate, such as the family's despair in *Alexis*, the young man's mourning in *Gilles* because he cannot control the situation, or Soliman's loss of consciousness in *Antioche* that is inappropriate since he is not sick. In *Thèbes*, Antoine's fainting is not suitable for a knight because he should take action instead of lamenting.

The author of *Thèbes* further uses the motif of fainting to emphasize the characters' specific roles. When the Theban army mocks Tydée's death, Polynice loses consciousness upon seeing his friend, "quant le conut, sur lui se pasme" (v. 7329). The narrator specifically notes that Polynice is not ashamed of his sorrow and openly weeps as he uses his sleeve to wipe his eyes, "si il fait doel, pas ne s'en blasme; / Poliniciés fait doel estrange, / sovent tert ses oilz oue sa manche" (v. 7330-7332). Since descriptions normally surround the cause of the loss of consciousness, it is rare for characters to express shame or embarrassment due to their fainting,

but as descriptions of emotions increase in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, authors provide greater psychological depictions of the characters. Polynice has no shame of his fainting, but his distress deepens and Adraste must stop him from killing himself. Adraste removes him from the presence of his deceased friend, since the sight of the deceased provokes intense mourning, but the situation worsens when the Theban army steals Tydée's body.

The sight of the approaching army causes the majority of the Greeks to faint, "li plusor del doel se pasmoient / quant virent venir ceux dedenz" (v. 7438-7439), and King Adraste must quickly tell his men to forget their chagrin and fight. Polynice, however, keeps fainting, "Polinicés se pasme et plore" (v. 7451). Mirroring Eustache in the Theban army, Adraste insists that Polynice stop crying and prove his friendship by taking revenge. Adraste further states that women and children can cry, but knights must fight, "et sa fenne plorer touz jors; / femme et enfant deivent plorer, / et chevaliers granz colps doner" (v. 7460-7462). Even though the narrator reveals that Adraste is also in distress, "molt sont dolent il et li reis" (v. 7477), Adraste's statement shows fainting and prolonged mourning to be unsuitable behaviors for knights on the battlefield, similar to the pope in *Alexis* who says that unrestrained fainting and despair are not appropriate for Christians. Distress is not inappropriate, but it should cause a knight to act and fight, while the role of the women and children is to continue to mourn. This is evident in the epic texts, especially in the *Chanson de Roland*, in which fainting can be a sign of strength and devotion. However, the distress of Charlemagne and his army propels them to action and victory, and Polynice must use his distress to propel himself to action. As the verse and prose romances continue to reveal the appropriate behaviors in certain situations, it is clear that fainting is not effeminate. It is only unsuitable for men to lose consciousness repeatedly in battle because they should act. In other situations, fainting becomes an important sign of love in both men and

women, and characters are concerned with courtly discretion because the greater the love, the greater the instances of syncope.

The *Roman de Thèbes* shows that fainting is a shared phenomenon in male and female characters. There is a greater awareness of the gendered aspect of syncope as females begin to faint in situations where males normally do and vice versa. One notable example of female fainting in a situation normally reserved for masculine fainting occurs when groups of people faint in unison. Beginning in the *Chanson de Roland*, the fainting of groups of knights in unison creates a spectacle that is not easily ignored, and the *Roman de Thèbes*, again showing the influence of the *chansons de geste* on this *roman d'antiquité*, provides three instances of this collective form of syncope. The first arises when Hippomédon returns bleeding and gravely injured to the Greek camp, and one hundred knights faint from distress and one thousand cry, "cent se pasment de la dolour / et mil en plorent de tendrour" (v. 3545-3546). Their collective distress highlights the character of Hippomédon, as the spectacle provokes pity and Hippomédon hides the seriousness of his injuries and fights bravely for his men.[63] In the second instance, King Étéocle faints on his horse when he hears that his best knight, Atys, is dead, "sur le col del destrer se pasme" (v. 6851), and his entire army of one hundred men also mourn and faint, "et lour seignor regretent fort / que veient illoec gesir mort. / Pasmé giesent el pavement, / si se complaignent franchement" (v. 6887-6890). The narrator describes the knights' mourning as unrestrained, "cil font grant doel a demesure" (v. 6881), and their fainting emphasizes their

[63] Fighting to secure the tower at the Monflor castle, Hippomédon, a warrior full of prowess and boldness (v. 3517-3518), notices a breech in the rampart and goes alone to protect it. He returns injured and bleeding to his camp, causing a hundred men to faint from distress, and one thousand to cry, "cent se pasment de la dolour / et mil en plorent de tendrour" (v. 3545-3546). Similar to the twenty thousand men who faint in the *Chanson de Roland* after the death of Roland, these one hundred men are distraught because one of their best knights is injured. Hippomédon tries to ignore his injuries, remain courageous, and even gets back on his horse to comfort his faint-hearted men (v. 3554-3555). He obviously suffers from his wounds, "Ipomedon est angoissos / de sa plaie, et molt dolorous" (v. 3559-3560), but distress of his men provoke pity and strengthen him to continue. As a result, the Greeks fight and take the tower from the Theban army.

overwhelming, uncontrolled emotions. In the *Chanson de Roland* the narrator does not mention the group of knights again after the collective faint, but in the *Roman de Thèbes*, the narrator says that the fainted men lie on the ground and lament, apparently at the same time. The plaint praises the valiance of Atys, and the knights' fallen state mimics the dead state of Atys, as the poet uses the verb "gesir" in both instances.[64] Typical of a scene in which a group loses consciousness, this scene delays the narrative time to emphasize Atys's importance to the group, while also allowing the narrator to transition to the mourning Ismène, as we will analyze later in this chapter.

The third and most unique loss of consciousness of a group occurs near the end of the text after Polynice mortally wounds his brother, and Étéocle takes revenge and kills Polynice. King Adraste, Capanée, and a messenger are the only surviving Greeks, and as a messenger delivers the devastating news, the cries of the women fill the city, "les dames pleinent lour marriz / et les mieres pleignent lour filz, / et les sorurs plaignent lour friers, / et les filles plainent lor pieres" (v. 11559-11562). The narrator explains that the women change color, wring their hands, break their rings, pull their hair, and hit their faces before four thousand of them faint and die, "tiels quatre mil se pasmerent / que onques puis ne releverent: / mort sount les benurez, / les almes ount des cors sevrez" (v. 11573-11576). Like Aude in the *Chanson de Roland* after the death of Roland, these women faint dead at the devastating news, and their deep despair is a dramatic end to the lamentations. Syncope pauses the action, and as the poet switches to the joyful, victorious Theban army, the stark contrast further emphasizes the mourning of the Greeks. The narrator quickly states that the joy of the Theban army does not endure since they

[64] As is common in scenes of intense mourning, characters often state that they have lived too long or wish to join the deceased in death, and their unconsciousness resembles the death that they often desire.

also sustain loss (v. 11578), but the narrator's favoritism toward the Greeks is visible, as the people of Thèbes are seen as cruel and disrespectful.

The loss of consciousness of four thousand women enlarges the paradigm of fainting of the mourning mother in *Alexis* or the faithful lover of Aude in *Roland*, and emphasizes the larger role attributed to women in the *Roman de Thèbes*. After the collective faint, the story appears to be finished as the Greeks are in defeat and the people of Thèbes choose Créon as their new king. However, the poet refers to the spectacle of the mourning women to advance the story's action.[65] He says that the mourning women that he previously mentioned, which include the four thousand who fainted, decide to act because they cannot endure the suffering any longer.

> car les dames que jeo vous dis,
> qui regretoient lour amys,
> [quant] assez ourent doel mené,
> un parlement ajousté:
> ne porent mais plus endurer (v. 11609-11613).

Twenty thousand women find Tydée's and Polynice's wives and travel to Thèbes to recover the bodies of their men (v. 11614-11662). The approaching army of women causes Adraste such distress that he faints, "si se pasme de la dolour" (v. 11696), as he regrets that he was not killed with his men. Capanée must stop him from killing himself, and his fainted state mimics the death that he desires. Emphasizing his sadness, the narrator explains that Adraste faints for the third time and falls because he cannot hold himself up, "de duel tierce feiz s'esvani; / ne se poet tenir, si chaï" (v. 11709-11710). Since the poet does not mention the second loss of consciousness, stating that Adraste faints for the third time stresses the intensity of his grief. For the third faint,

[65] As we will see in the third chapter of this study, Chrétien de Troyes also uses fainting as a means of linking different episodes together. Fainting becomes an essential element of his *conjointure*.

he employs the verb "s'esvanir,"[66] instead of the commonly used "pasmer," to depict Adraste's loss of consciousness. Whereas "pasmer" signifies a loss of consciousness, "esvanir" can also mean to disappear or to become weak. With this verb, the poet insists on Adraste's weakening body and his involuntary loss of consciousness as an external sign of his extreme chagrin.

Mourning once again pauses the narrative action, but Adraste is able to compose himself to help counsel the women and lead them to their loved ones. This scene near the end of the *Roman de Thèbes* juxtaposes the strengths and weaknesses of the army of women. For example, when the women begin their journey to find Adraste, they are barefoot, have disheveled hair, and do not walk quickly because they are not used to traveling such great lengths, "mais elles n'aloient pas tost, / car de l'errer n'erent apprises" (v. 11650-11651). They also appear weak when Adraste, leading the group to Thèbes, becomes discouraged because of their fatigue and pain (v. 11725-11729). Adraste and the Duke of Athens join forces, and Adraste describes the women as "dolentes […] et desguarrez, / chaitives et malurez / por lour amis, qui sont morz" (v. 11808-11810). However, once the army attacks, the narrator illustrates the women's strength and courage as they fight back without fear and demolish the walls.

> Donc veïssez femmes ramper,
> ou mails d'acier les murs flaser;
> as ungles esracent forment,
> pertus y fierent plus de cent;
> ne lour chaleit quis oscist
> ne qui unques mal lour fist:
> molt se combateient forment (v. 11906-11912).

[66] The verb first appears in the *Chronique des ducs de Normandie* by Benoît de Saint-Maure in 1160 (Greimas, "esvanir").

In the end, Adraste and the Duke of Athens successfully defeat Créon and the women bury the dead. The narrator states, however, that after achieving their goal the women return home, and lament the rest of their lives (v. 12042-12043). The army of women is an essential element in the *Roman de Thèbes* because their mourning incites Adraste to act and, as a result, leads to the final battle, as the narrator says "De tiel guise fina la guerre / de Thebes pur le regne quere" (v. 12044-12045). The dramatic and memorable fainting of the four thousand attracts the reader's attention and highlights the women. The scene then functions as a narrative prosthesis to propel the action as the narrator relies on the previously mentioned women to continue the story. This instance occurs at the final turning point in the battle and gives the ultimate victory, if indeed there is one, to the Greeks. Fainting shows the women's complete devotion to their loved ones, and the fighting of the surviving women to recover the bodies of their men effectively illustrates the horror and devastation of war.

In the devotion to loved ones and the devastation of war, the use of the motif of fainting presents elements of courtly love in the *Roman de Thèbes*, especially in the relationship of Ismène and Atys. Ismène contrasts with her sister, Antigone, who is in love with Parthenopée and "acts as a model of conduct" (Jones 23). The narrator describes Parthenopée as "sages et bien corteis" (v. 4196)[67] and says that the two lovers are well-matched, "molt fuissent bien jousté il dui, / car il dui sont bien d'un aage, / d'une bealté et d'une parage" (v. 4205-4207). Antigone also insists that love must not be in haste when she says "legierment amer ne dei" (v. 4245). On the other hand, when the reader first meets Ismène she is described as young, educated, *courtoise*, the friend of Atys, "molt fu joefne, mais bien fu doite / et bien courteise et bien

[67] The adjective "cortois" or "corteis" first appears in the *Chanson de Roland* and describes someone who conforms to "l'idéal de la vie noble" or has good manners (Greimas, "cortois, corteis"). The adjective in *Thèbes* then seems to function in two different ways. It shows that Parthenopée acts correctly according to the feudal sense, whereas Ismène is "courteise" due to her manners, her youth, and her relationship with Atys. The adjective will continue to be used more for courtly love than in the feudal sense.

ledoite. / Ysmeine fu amie Aton" (v. 4160-4162), and as a well-spoken lady who likes to argue, "elle [est] molt contrariose; / bien est corteise, bien parole" (v. 4483-4484). Atys also appears as a courtly lover, and Jones notes that the vocabulary used to describe him is similar to the vocabulary of courtly love, especially with the word *jovens* (26). Furthermore, when Ismène watches the battle she notices the sleeve that she gave him and says she must love Atys because of all he is doing for her, "Veez come broche a ceo tornei! / Sor tote rien amer le dei, / car toute yceo fait il pour mei" (v. 4783-4785). As Antigone and Ismène continue to watch the battle from their window, they talk about their lovers and Antigone notes that her sister can talk to or embrace her lover whenever she desires (v. 6762-6764), whereas she cannot. Jones illustrates that this passage differs from the original *Thebaid* because the *Roman de Thèbes* depicts the sisters talking about their lovers, but the *Thebaid* says that the sisters talk about their family and lament their fortunes (Jones 25). There is an increased influence and importance of the theme of love, as well as the sister's different attitudes about love.

The scene quickly changes, however, when Atys is mortally injured. As we have already seen, Atys faints after being injured by Tydée, and then awakens to forgive his killer. As the men bring Atys back to the city, Ismène fears for her lover and falls fainted, "d'Aton crieint, qu'ele ot molt chiere, / pasmé cheet sur la planchiere" (v. 6795-6796). Her fear of not knowing if Atys is still alive causes her to lose consciousness, and her sister must support her when she awakens and acts as if she has lost her senses. The narrator further describes Ismène's deep love, already evident from her loss of consciousness, by stating that it is not a game, "car ele ne l'aime pas a jeus" (v. 6804). He then shifts to Atys who faints often from his injuries, "sovent se pasme" (v. 6807). As his men try to pry his mouth open and put ointment on his tongue so that he can talk,

he asks for Ismène, but he dies as soon as he sees her.[68] Resembling the final scene of *Pyrame et Thisbé* that we will analyze later in this chapter, this episode depicts Ismène seeing her lover die and then fainting on his body, "Ysmeine l'acole et l'enbrace, / et sovent se pasme en la place" (v. 6829-6830). Words cannot describe Ismène's feelings, and multiple instances of fainting slow the narrative time and allow a greater focus on the two lovers. Atys's fainting delays his death and allows him to see her one last time, while Ismène illustrates her complete devotion as she faints and appears dead, unable to breathe, see, or move,

> Une leuee fust Ysmeine
> mort sanz fume et sanz aleiene;
> de lié poez oïr merveille:
> nen ot ne veit ne el ne cille,
> ne ne se mut mais que la pierre;
> vert esteit come foille d'ierre;
> point de colour n'ot en sa face,
> ainz devint freide come glace (v. 6831-6838).

Similar to the description given after the death of Parthenopée, the text describes Ismène's body that is stiff and cold, yet also green. Jones discusses the description of Ismène as green as ivy and suggests that the poet is adapting the language for the twelfth-century audience by using a likely "twelfth-century cliché," as the same description is seen in the twelfth-century *Pyrame et Thisbé* (96). In addition to being pale, turning green verifies a fainted state. Even though Ismène appears dead, the next verse shows the other characters noticing a vein beating in her neck, "Al col lui troevent une veine / que li bateit a qualque peine" (v. 6839-6840). According to the processes of verifying life described by Alexandre-Bidon, checking for the pulse follows checking the

[68] "ovrit ses oils, si l'ad veüe, / atant l'alme est del cors eissue" (v. 6821-6822).

temperature of the body (167), and this scene adds to the paradigm of how characters distinguish between a fainted and dead state.[69]

As Ismène's mother and sister pick her up and take her to her room, the scene shifts to Étéocle who learns of Atys's death. Jones notes that the original *Thebaid* states that Ismène is self-conscious about mourning in public, but the *Roman de Thèbes* leaves out this detail (24-25).[70] This is interesting when juxtaposed with Adraste's remarks that lamenting should be left for women and children. Whereas Polynice's mourning is not appropriate for a knight, the narrator's omission implies that Ismène's behavior is suitable for women. As the mourning continues for Étéocle and the army of men, Ismène's mother will not let Ismène see Atys in order to keep her from fainting continually, "car de tant come plius le verreit, / sur le cors plius se pasmereit" (v. 6941-6942). The narrator does not state whether the mother thinks it is shameful to faint in public or if she is worried about her daughter's health, but when Ismène exclaims that she will die if she cannot see Atys, the mother lets her go.

Ismène's character represents the women from the epic texts and the courtly romances. While her relationship with Atys presents elements of courtly love, her actions after Atys's death are similar to those in the *chansons de geste*. Her fainting is an external sign of her emotions and resembles the *planctus* from the epic texts (Mora-Lebrun 28), as she sees the body of her lover and laments, saying that Atys was her husband even if they were not yet married (v. 6996-6998). The adaptations of the French poet in the *Roman de Thèbes* portray the culture of the twelfth century by the greater focus on love, as well as realistic medical details. As noted, Atys's men

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[69] *Roland*: Charlemagne notices Aude is limp; *Guillaume d'Orange*: Guillaume notices Vivien's heart pounding in his chest; *Thèbes*: Dorcée notices Parthenopée's cold and rigid body; *Thèbes*: characters notice Ismène's vein beating in her neck. These examples seem obvious, but are not very common in the chosen texts of this study, and therefore attract the reader's attention.

[70] In Chrétien de Troyes's romances as well as the *Lancelot en prose*, women often try to mourn in private so that they do not reveal their hidden love, yet Ismène is not concerned with courtly discretion.

put balm on his tongue and try to separate his teeth to allow him to talk, and characters notice Ismène's vein beating in her neck, and these details are the French poet's additions (Jones 96). The author of the *Roman de Thèbes* shows a greater medical awareness than the authors of the earlier texts, and this awareness continues to increase in twelfth and thirteenth-century literature.

All of these elements of courtly love contribute to the *Roman de Thèbes*'s transitional position between the epic texts and the courtly romances. While Jones insists that this text is not a courtly romance, she shows that it does contain an "atmosphere of courtliness" (28). Mora-Lebrun also explains that the elements that the author of the *Roman de Thèbes* begins to employ will later become the rules for the courtly romances, especially those of Chrétien de Troyes (28-29). The different uses of the motif of fainting in *Thèbes* help illustrate the similarities with the *chansons de geste* as well as elucidating the changing functions in the twelfth-century verse romances.

Pyrame et Thisbé

Similar to the *romans d'antiquité*, the short tale of *Pyrame et Thisbé*, from around 1155,[71] is another key example of the amplifications and increasingly detailed verse of the twelfth century. Inspired by Ovid, the French *Pyrame et Thisbé* tells the story of two young lovers tormented by forbidden love. While the *Roman de Thèbes* does not have a large Ovidian influence (Jones 96), the *Roman d'Enéas* does, and *Pyrame et Thisbé* offers an interesting point of comparison. As Baumgartner illustrates, *Pyrame et Thisbé* increases the descriptions of the characters' love with monologues, dialogues, and melancholic plaints (*Pyrame* 15). Jones adds that the French poet "has changed Ovid's use of the third person plural and … has split up

[71] Critics claim that *Pyrame* was composed before *Enéas* and after *Thèbes*, therefore around 1155-1160 (Baumgartner, *Pyrame* 10; Kibler, *Piramus* 274).

Ovid's collective speeches into monologues and dialogues, thus making Pyramus and Thisbe two clearly differentiated characters" (7). Moreover, these two characters show different conceptions of love, *leal amor* and *fol'amor* (7)[72]. William Kibler's article, "A Medieval Adaptor at Work" details *Pyrame et Thisbé*'s use of *amplificatio*, and explains that "while to Classical theorists the term implied 'emphasizing, or underlining (an idea)', to the medieval writer it meant quite simply 'developing or expanding (a theme)" (276).[73] The French adaptation of *Pyrame et Thisbé* then expands the theme of love and offers clear depictions of the suffering young lovers. While Ovid describes the effects and sickness of love in his *Pyramus*, he does not use fainting, and the twelfth-century French poet develops lovesickness and adds fainting as symptom. As we will see, syncope enriches the tale and dramatizes the emotions of the two young lovers.

In this story, Pyrame and Thisbé fall in love and are inseparable from a young age, but a quarrel between their fathers prohibits the two lovers from being together. Unable to see each other, their love grows and torments them. However, when they are finally able to talk through a small hole in the wall, their anguish only increases, and they decide to escape to be together. Thisbé arrives first, but drops her veil when she is scared away by a lion. As Pyrame arrives and sees the bloody veil torn by a lion, he mistakenly assumes that Thisbé is dead, and kills himself. Thisbé then reappears from hiding and kills herself upon seeing her lover die.

In these 921 lines expanded from Ovid's 111[74], fainting occurs five times, and Pyrame and Thisbé both announce their approaching loss of consciousness. From the very beginning, the

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[72] In her study of *Pyrame et Thisbé*, Jones gives an in-depth analysis of the concept of love. She analyzes the monologues and dialogues, and shows the additions to Ovid's original tale.

[73] Kibler quotes Edmond Faral's *Arts poétiques*: "Par 'amplifier', les anciens entendaient 'rehausser (une idée), la faire valoir'… Mais les théoriciens du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle entendent par là 'développer, allonger (un sujet)'." (61).

[74] The number of verses is also noted in Baumgartner, *Pyrame* 263; Kibler, *Piramus* 275.

poet describes the effects of love that no one can endure for long because once the arrow strikes, it causes one to sigh even though there is no apparent pain, and to become pale even though blood has not been lost, "Sans dolour fait traire souspir, / Sans sanc espandre fait palir" (v. 33-34)[75]. The poet further states that the arrow first strikes by sight and then occupies the lover's thoughts until death comes (v. 40-46). Descriptions of love resemble those of an injury with blood loss and paleness. Authors analyze the medical definitions of lovesickness, especially from the works of Constantine the African in the eleventh century. In her study analyzing Constantine's *Viaticum*, Mary Frances Wack shows that Galen first described the sickness of love, believing that it was a human emotion of sorrow causing people to become sick, pale, lose sleep, develop a fever, and become depressed (7). Constantine's translations into Latin then renewed the medical understanding of lovesickness and offered ways to interpret and control passionate behavior (30). Tracy Adams affirms the importance of Constantine's work that describes the seriousness of excessive desire with "observable symptoms rather than the subjective inner struggles" (31). In his *Viaticum*, Constantine himself explains the change in pulse, heaviness of the eyes, and the tendency to become melancholic due to love (Wack 189).

This theme of lovesickness is evident throughout the tale of *Pyrame et Thisbé*, as the poet often notes the paleness and sickness that cannot be healed by medicine (v. 136), and that is like a ravaging fire (v. 188). In his first monologue as he is tormented by love, Pyrame mentions fainting as an extreme symptom of his illness. He exclaims,

> Consente moi li Dieux d'amour
> Qu'encor la tiengne nuit et jour,
> Ou a leesce ou a dolour!
> Pasmer

[75] All verse citations come from C. De Boer's edition.

M’estuet errant; ne puis parler.

Or sui hetiez, or vueil plorer,

Or ai grant chaut, or vueil trambler (v. 197-203).

The poet emphasizes fainting by only noting the verb “pasmer” in a line of verse, and Pyrame announces his imminent faint. This announcement stresses the intense emotions that overwhelm Pyrame’s body and cause him to lose consciousness, and before he can finish his lament, he becomes pale and falls on the ground, “Cheï pasmez el pavement” (v. 207). As the texts in this chapter will show, fainting represents suffering, whether physical or emotional, and is an expected sign of lovesickness.

The scene transitions from the pale Pyrame who slowly regains consciousness to continue his plaint, then to Thisbé’s room, where she manifests the same symptoms as her lover. As Jones shows, Pyrame focuses on the effects of love, while Thisbé calls herself “fole” and tries to distinguish between love and reason (6-7). She tries to convince herself to forget her lover and follow her family’s wishes, but quickly succumbs to her feelings. She also announces her collapse and her plaint echoes Pyrame’s as she says,

Li diex d’amour le me consente,

Ou bel me soit ou m’en repente,

Qu’entre mes bras encor le sente

Par termes.

Ci fine mes complainz en lermes.

Pasmer m’estuet; or est li termes.

Ensi

M’estuet faire par chascun di:

Tel fief tieng je de mon ami (v. 298-306).

Thisbé then faints three times before again asking the gods to allow her to talk to her lover, "La pucele est trois fois pasmee" (v. 307). Kibler states that each lament reaffirms their impossible love and that "their total lack of strength in the face of love is effectively symbolized as each faints at the end of his complaint" (*Piramus* 280). Fainting is a symptom of lovesickness and also represents the lover's hopelessness. One key difference between the two plaints is that Thisbé faints three times. Throughout the tale, the poet suggests that Thisbé's character and love are stronger than Pyrame's, and her continuous fainting further distinguishes her as it shows the intensity of her emotions. On the other hand, Pyrame pities himself and blames Thisbé (Kibler, *Piramus* 280). Thisbé even states that her love is stronger since she found a way for them to see each other through the crack in the wall, "Car qui plus aime plus voit cler" (v. 385). Kibler notes that the Old French poet is the first to add this detail about Thisbé (282), thus further calling attention to Thisbé's role in the poem. Rosemarie Jones explains that Thisbé is the prominent character who exhibits *leal amor*, or "mature love based on confidence" (6), because she remains faithful (9). Even though she thinks it to be folly in the beginning, her love appears stronger as she takes the initiative.

The small crack in the wall seems to be a remedy for the couple's intense suffering, and Pyrame asks for forgiveness for not having found it earlier. Fainting briefly functions as a narrative prosthesis when Thisbé awakens to find a solution and discovers the crack, but narrative time again slows as sight increases love's torments. When Thisbé peeks and sees Pyrame, she shakes, sighs, sweats, changes color, and becomes pale (v. 366-369).[76] While the text does not use the verb "pasmer," the details show that Thisbé forgets herself and does not

[76] "El premerain esgardement / Fremist et souspire et esprent, / Tressault et trestremble et tressue, / Tant sa color et si li mue" (v. 366-369).

know what to say, “Porpense soi qu’ele li die, / De soi meïsme s’entr’oblie” (v. 370-371). She may not lose consciousness completely, but has entered a trance-like state because of the torments of love. As we will examine more extensively in chapter three with Chrétien de Troyes, authors commonly use a form of the verb “oblier” to express a trance-like state due to love. D.R. Sutherland explains that in the courtly sense, this verb expresses unmindfulness due to love (169). While Thisbé is different from Chrétien’s courtly lovers lost in love trances, the poet’s use of “s’entr’oblie” shows the same overwhelming emotions that dominate and cause a character to be seemingly cut off from reality. As the narration pauses on Thisbé, who is frozen by emotion, she finally gathers her thoughts to speak to Pyrame, but reproaches him because love seems to be fun for him, but torment for her (v. 378-401).

The two lovers alternate their plaints until the effects of love become too strong for them to talk. These passages are an essential element of the tale as the alternating monologues convey the mutual suffering. Beginning with verse 150 and continuing to verse 589, these plaints delay the action, with fainting and trances being a key cause. Helen Laurie states that the “action comes to a complete standstill” (24), and Jones reiterates that this pause allows the poet to “explore the motivation and psychology of the characters, to present a conception of love and to concentrate on the interior aspect of the story” (4). Kibler further shows that the amplifications, lengthy lamentations, and physical symptoms of grief are a “means of portraying the psychological states of the lovers, thereby creating individualized and self-sustaining personages” (291). The plaints, lamentations, and syncope are all necessary to focus the reader’s attention on the internal suffering of the characters, and syncope further delays narrative time that is already slowed by the plaints.

Love at first sight is a common medieval idea, as for example, Andreas Capellanus explains this notion in his treatise on love (*Traité* 25).[77] In her analysis of syncope, Clément states that love at first sight is a shared syncope (33), as time seems to be suspended for the two lovers. This shared syncope is evident in *Pyrame et Thisbé* as narrative time slows. The poet quickly states that fifteen years pass (v. 122), but we know that the young couple's love continues to grow. Using the terminology of Paul Ricoeur, the narrating time, or time of narration, may last one verse, but the narrated time illustrates 15 years of love longing. The narrating time then slows and the reader reads 439 verses of plaints. The narrating time and narrated time come together to create the effect that the narrative time has come to a standstill and the reader is better able to understand the emotional suffering. In this extended time, the symptoms of love are explicit. Moreover, Jones notes that the French poet removes details describing the outside world that Ovid includes (4), and this deepens the focus on Pyrame and Thisbé. Differing from the hagiographical texts, the epics, or even the other *romans d'antiquité*, war, prowess, and the search for glory are absent (Baumgartner 16). The poet bases the narration on the emotions of love to an extent that the reader is unaware of other events.

Due to Pyrame's and Thisbé's forbidden love and emotional turmoil, it seems that their love must end tragically as they remain separated and are united only in death. The poet states that the two are too young to love, and Jones agrees with the tragic ending because the two acted in *desmesure* by going against the desire of their parents (6). Adams explains that the emotion of love overwhelms Pyrame and Thisbé, unlike the lovers in the later romances, and they are unprepared to deal with it (46-47). As we will see in the *Roman d'Enéas*, the notion of preparedness to deal with love becomes prominent. In *Pyrame et Thisbé*, when the young lovers

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[77] "L'amour est une passion naturelle qui naît de la vue de la beaute de l'autre sexe et de la pensée obsédante de cette beauté" (25).

sneak out of the house to meet by the fountain, Thisbé feels the house shake and sees the moon become pale, "Senti tot le palais fremir/ Et vit la lune empalir" (v. 636-637), and these descriptions resemble the lovers' lovesickness with trembling and paleness. Thisbé arrives to the fountain first, but drops her veil and hides when she sees the approaching lion. When Pyrame discovers the bloody veil, he believes his lover to be dead, becomes green like the ivy, rigid like a rock, and his blood stops (v. 702-704).[78] As seen with Ismène in the *Roman de Thèbes*, the poet uses the description of becoming green like ivy to express paleness and shock, modifying Ovid's original description of "paler than boxwood" (Jones 96). Pyrame's shock is evident and these descriptions resemble a loss of consciousness. Before stabbing himself, he offers his final plaint, desires death as the only comfort, and asks that the white berries change to black, the color of distress, to symbolize their death (v. 788-792). He falls to the ground as Thisbé arrives, and she notices the berries, hears Pyrame's groaning, sees his dying body, and faints, "Quant voit parmi le cors l'espee/ Fuit li li sans, si s'est pasmee." (v. 821-822). When she awakens, her plaint resembles epic mourning as she pulls her hair, tears her clothes, and scratches her face. This collapse begins when she sees Pyrame's seemingly dead body, and her lamentation expresses her desire to die so that they can be united in death even though they were separated in life. As she is addressing Pyrame, he opens his eyes, asks who brought her back to life, and dies (v. 900-901). This shock causes Thisbé to faint again, "Cil est mors et cele est pasmee" (v. 906). When she regains consciousness, she immediately stabs herself and falls on her lover. At the close of the tale, the poet exclaims that the couple's love was real, "Tant con li dure sens et vie/ Se demonstre veraie amie / Ici fenist des dues amanz. / Con lor leal amor fu granz" (v. 918-921).

Interestingly, the Old French version adds the scene in which Pyrame speaks to Thisbé just before his death (Kibler, *Piramus* 289). This moment allows a longer pause on the dying

[78] "Plus devint vers que feuille d'ierre, / Et refroidist come une pierre, / Mue le sanc, change corage"

Pyrame, as he stares at his lover, and Thisbé's resulting faint adequately expresses her internal and extreme emotions. Using Thisbé's reaction as an example, Kibler states that the medieval writer "strove to portray inner states only through corresponding (and generally predictable) manifestations or *signa* of *homo exterior*" (289). Although her words throughout the poem show the depth of her love, the action of fainting represents her complete devastation and the emotions that control her entire body. Moreover, syncope distinguishes Thisbé, and her *leal amor* is evident by her fainting, actions, and death. While Pyrame faints once because of his suffering due to the sickness of love, the repeated fainting of Thisbé illustrates the depth of her devotion to her lover and the pain once he is gone. Even though both Pyrame and Thisbé truly were in love and the poet states at the end of the tale, "Con lor leal amor fu granz!" (v. 921), they are unable to handle the symptoms of love, as the "Ovidian lais present love as an irresistible force and show their characters struggling helplessly against it" (Adams 73). This struggle also becomes apparent in the *Roman d'Enéas* in the relationships of Enéas, Didon, and Lavine.

<u>*Roman d'Enéas*</u>

The *Roman d'Enéas* from 1160 is another *roman d'antiquité* that borrows from the classical tradition, and adapts to reflect prevalent themes of the twelfth century. As Aimé Petit shows, these romances begin to distinguish themselves from the epics because of the relationship between battle exploits and love, and the role of women (8). The increasing role of women apparent in the *Roman de Thèbes* becomes even more prominent in *Enéas,* as land and love are the main causes of battle. The author of the *Roman d'Enéas* bases his romance on Vergil's *Aeneid*, but the adaptations, such as changes affecting characterization[79], show the twelfth-

[79] Rosemarie Jones lists the differences between Vergil's *Aeneid* and the *Roman d'Enéas*, and explains that the "changes which the French poet has made to the text of Vergil affect characterization rather than the story

century's increased interest in emotions, especially suffering due to love. The author "s'intéresse à la naissance de l'amour, aux tourments qu'il provoque, à la complexité et à la diversité des itinéraires amoureux" (Petit 17). In these diverse and complex love scenes and the resulting suffering, the motif of fainting is prevalent as characters describe love as a sickness, similar to *Pyrame et Thisbé*. Even scenes that are similar to traditional battlefield mourning in the epic texts express emotion more deeply.

In this romance, Enéas first seeks refuge in Carthage and meets Didon, before continuing to the land of Lombardie where his ancestors once lived. Turnus has been promised this land and King Latinus's daughter, Lavine, but the King then promises both to Enéas, resulting in a battle between the two men. The text contains 26 instances of syncope, [80] and the detailed scenes surrounding relationships are unique, as the poet uses the motif of fainting and lengthy monologues to illustrate distress and sickness. Instances of battlefield fainting present similarities between the *chansons de geste* and the *romans d'antiquité*, while comparing and contrasting Enéas's relationships with Didon and Lavine allows the reader to see a clear difference in the characters' ability to handle lovesickness.

Similarly to the *Roman de Thèbes*, the *Roman d'Enéas* reflects the epic scenes of mourning after a death during battle, and one noteworthy example comes after the death of Pallas. Seeking help from the neighboring King Evandre, Enéas recruits Evandre's son, Pallas, to fight, but Turnus quickly kills him (v. 5825).[81] Although the descriptions of battle are less and less common in *Enéas*, the clash between Turnus and Pallas resembles the epic descriptions

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itself." The obvious changes include reducing the mythological content, and scenes in which the poet "adapts or condenses" (30).

[80] 21 actual faints, 1 trance, 3 mentions of fainting in lovesickness, and 1 announcement of despair.

[81] All citations come from Aimé Petit's edition.

(Petit 15), and parallel uses of the motif of fainting arise. Similar to the announcement in the *Roman de Thèbes* that Parthenopée's mother will collapse when she hears of her son's death, Enéas anticipates the lamentations that will occur when he sends Pallas's body back to his parents (v. 6243-6244). Upon pronouncing Pallas's strength, but also the fragility of life, Enéas faints on his friend, "dessor le mort chaÿ pausmez; / et quant il en fu relevez, / le mort baisa tout en plorant" (v. 6272-6274). Following the paradigm of fainting, a *planctus* occurs after the death of a valiant warrior, including fainting as an external sign of mourning. The scene transitions to the lamenting parents, and the anticipated distress begins as soon as Pallas's body arrives. As in hagiography, the news of his son's death provokes Evandre's distress, as he pulls out his hair, cries, hits his head, scratches his face, and faints more than twenty times, "Il se pame plus de .XX. foys" (v. 6317). The mother then hears the news, sees the dead body, and faints one thousand times, "de dessuz lui. M. foys se pament" (v. 6328), and the exaggerated frequency of her fainting reflects the depth of her feelings. The poet uses the common motif of fainting, but the hyperbolic statements allow him to intensify the grief and distinguish this scene from previous texts. Moreover, the parents' reactions show complete despair. Whereas in the *Vie de saint Alexis*, the pope interjects and says there is hope, and in the *Chanson de Roland* the men praise Roland and believe that they are fighting for the true ideal, the mother in *Enéas* awakens to curse the gods to whom she had prayed for protection (v. 6329-6333). Her reaction resembles that of Bramimonde in *Roland* who curses her pagan gods after her defeat, or Garison and Soliman in the *Chanson d'Antioche* who faint multiple times and are ashamed to lose their cities.

Troyens try to comfort the king and queen by praising the valiance of Pallas, but the mother does not want to watch or listen (v. 6356-6359). She cannot be consoled and the father, lamenting the fact that he has no heritor, cannot stop fainting, "li roys moult souvent se pamoit"

(v. 6435). Leaving his son's coffin, the king continues to faint, "al departir sovent se pasme" (v. 6585), and the poet leaves the family in despair as the scene shifts to King Latinus who states the folly of the war. Similar to the *Roman de Thèbes*, this theme is clear, as the warriors die in vain because characters say that the war should have never begun. While the motif of fainting has a similar use to the hagiographical texts and the epics and is easily recognizable for the reader, the *romans d'antiquité* slightly adapt the motif and use it to illustrate despair. For instance, the constant fainting surrounding the death of Roland makes it easy to identify the valiance of Charlemagne's army and the strength of Roland, but the fainting surrounding the deaths of warriors in the *romans d'antiquité* makes it easy to notice the futility of war and the resulting despair.

A similar scene that mirrors the funeral of Pallas occurs after the death of Camille, a female warrior fighting for Turnus's cause. Camille is queen of the Volsques and the poet describes her as "courtoise, preuz et sage" (v. 4052), resembling the epic descriptions of male warriors. The poet praises Camille's beauty as well as her strength, and her feats in battle as she kills many. One Trojan warrior, Arruns, however, follows Camille closely and kills her. After avenging her death, Camille's army begins to despair. Turnus receives news of Camille's death, finds her body, faints continuously, and wants to die, "Moult souvent se pamoit Turnus, / dist qu'il n'a soing de vivre plus, / quant la pucelle est por lui morte" (v. 7317-7319). Turnus laments the death of Camille, and compares the loss of Camille with that of Pallas (v. 7452-7455). Aimé Petit also notes the similarities between the two death scenes and says that the French poet amplifies these minor characters from Vergil's story. According to her, both characters act as a substitute for a main character, Pallas for Enéas and Camille for Turnus, and give more coherence to the story (14). Similar to *Thèbes*, this *roman d'antiquité* contains elements of the

chansons de geste, notable here in the alternating scenes of mourning. However, this dual-focus aspect highlights the extreme emotions in both armies, and serves to show the senselessness of the war.[82] Noticing these similarities, fainting during the *planctus* is expected. Turnus blames himself for Camille's death and faints often, "Turnus se dementoit forment, / et moult se repasmoit souvent / et regretoit la damoiselle" (v. 7491-7493). Just as Enéas follows Pallas's litter and does not want to leave his friend, Turnus also stays with the body until the last moment, then kisses the litter and faints more than thirty times, "Au departir baisa defors / .C. foys la biere ou gist le cors; / plus de .XXX. foys se pama" (v. 7573-7575). The exaggerated frequency of fainting again illustrates deep despair, but comparing the death scenes of Camille and Pallas offers interesting insight. The dramatic fainting and the extravagance of both funerals, including the eternal flame burning for the deceased, illustrate the characters' importance, yet Camille's death provokes exactly the same response as Pallas's. The poet does not diminish Camille's importance, and the increasing role of female characters in the twelfth century is once again evident, as Camille is seen as equal to the male warriors. The motif of fainting allows the reader to sympathize with the extreme emotions and recognize the importance of the female characters.

Syncope also provides a comparison of the ways in which two critical female characters control the emotional turmoil that love causes. Similar to *Pyrame et Thisbé*, fainting is a symptom of lovesickness, and the *Roman d'Enéas* juxtaposes the relationships of Didon and Lavine to demonstrate *fol'amor* and *leal amor*. Beginning with Didon, fainting exposes her true feelings for Enéas, but also her loss of control and despair. When Enéas first arrives in Carthage

[82] The *Roman d'Enéas* does not appear to primarily be a dual-focus text, like the *Chanson de Roland*, but uses elements of the dual-focus theory, especially in battle scenes, to focus on emotions. The dual-focus nature also shows the influence of the *chansons de geste*.

from Troy, he meets the beautiful, wise, and *cortoise* Didon,[83] who richly governs her land. Yet love causes a complete transformation in her, and descriptions of *fol'amor*, or rash and irrational love, begin to transform her character.[84] She burns with love's flame (v. 790), sighs, and changes color in the presence of Enéas (v. 1286-1287).[85] When Didon goes to bed, her love consumes her thoughts and her entire body appears ill.

de lui commence a penser,
en son coraige a recorder
son vis, son corps et sa figure,
ses diz, ses fais, sa parleüre,
les batailles que il li dist.
Ne fust pour rien qu'elle dormist;
torne et retorne souvent,
elle se pame et estent,
souffle, souspire et baille,
moult se demente et travaille,
tramble, fremist et si tressaut;
li cuers li mant et si li faut.
Moult est la dame mal baillie,
et quant c'est qu'elle s'entroblie,
ensamble o lui cuide gesir, (v. 1306-1320)

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83 "moult par estoit cortoisse et sage" (v. 540)

84 In the *Aeneid*, Didon falls in love after kissing Ascanius (Cupid), but in *Enéas*, she is already in love before receiving the gifts (Jones 33). Arranged by Enéas's mother, Venus, so that Didon will treat her son favorably, Cupidon takes the form of Enéas's son and brings Didon gifts. Didon becomes mad with love, "de lui amer est toute folle" (v. 881).

85 "Amours la point, Amours l'argüe, / souvent souspire, color mue"

Didon even begins to hallucinate and think that Enéas is next to her. The verb "s'entroblie," as also seen with Thisbé, indicates that Didon forgets herself and enters a trance-like state, mimicking fainting, as she is separated from reality. Syncope in the form of an actual loss of consciousness and in the form of the lover's trance clearly demonstrates the all-consuming inner emotions that control her body and present themselves externally.

As is common for love-struck characters, Didon reveals that she is dying even though she is in perfect health. Her sister, Anna, thinks she suffers from an actual illness, but Didon knows that love is killing her (v. 1354-1357). As seen in the effects of love outlined in *Pyrame et Thisbé*, and explained in medieval medicine beginning with Galen and continuing with Constantine, love is a sickness, with fainting as a key symptom. Mary Frances Wack discusses Ovid's influence on medical treatises, namely Constantine's *Viaticum*. She states that "medical views of love … could draw upon [Ovid's] poetic authority for acceptance" (15), as readers of Constantine often left marginal notes about Ovid in the manuscripts (15). The Ovidian influences on the *Roman d'Enéas* are apparent, and it is possible that the medical treatises also influenced the romances. However, Edmond Faral, in his detailed analysis of the Latin sources and courtly romances, dismisses the idea that the twelfth-century poets were aware of the medical treatises on lovesickness because Ovid's works on love, especially the *Ars amandi* and the *Remedia amoris*, were incredibly widespread (*Recherches* 135) and his influences in the *Roman d'Enéas* are clear.[86] Whether or not the medical treatises actively influenced the poet of the *Roman d'Enéas*, it is noticeable that there is a unique relationship between the medical culture and the literary works seen in similar descriptions.

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[86] The French poet took Ovid's model and amplified it (154), and relied on Ovid to expand the characters of Lavine and Enéas (126). There are similarities in love's descriptions in Ovid and *Enéas* (133), and in the monologues (150). Showing that love can injure and heal also comes from Ovid (145). Rosemarie Jones also lists the Ovidian influences on the *Roman d'Enéas* (31).

The poet of the *Roman d'Enéas*, like the poet of *Pyrame et Thisbé*, uses *amplificatio* to enrich the classical work, as evident in Didon's symptoms of lovesickness. Faral also lists the effects of love the French poet uses to adapt Vergil's original text, especially the multiple instances of fainting (*Recherches* 119).[87] Another addition is yawning. As Lucie Polak shows, the French poet lists yawning, which is not a symptom given by Vergil or Ovid. Interestingly, Chrétien de Troyes then uses both fainting and yawning to describe lovesickness in *Cligès* (17). It is notable that Vergil, Constantine, and Ovid do not list fainting as a major symptom, but the poets of the *Roman d'Enéas* and *Pyrame et Thisbé* do. Syncope, therefore, is an element of the *amplificatio* to the twelfth-century adaptations of classical works that deserves the reader's attention.

After Didon reveals to her sister Anna that she is in love, she loses consciousness as she tries to reveal her lover's name, "Et quant elle le dut nommer, / si se pama, ne pot parler" (v. 1360-1361). She then awakens to praise Enéas's valiance, distresses that she should remain loyal to her dead husband, names Enéas, and faints again, "Quant l'en souvint, qu'el le nomma, / elle nerci si se pasma; / a pou que elle ne fu morte" (v. 1408-1410). Didon's fainting dramatically illustrates her conflicting emotions while also framing her conversation with her sister. On a practical level, her unconsciousness silences her lamenting and transitions to Anna, who tries to treat her sickness, since it is impossible to conquer love (v.1458). Anna tells Didon to make Enéas her "seignor" in order to have a man to help govern the land (v. 1434-1451), and her advice reflects the political role of a relationship that is common in the feudal epics.[88] According to Ovid and the twelfth-century medical texts, this relationship should help Didon's lovesickness,

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[87] As mentioned in the introduction of this study, in Vergil's *Aeneid* Dido only faints once as Enéas leaves Carthage (book 4 verse 393).

[88] This theme becomes very common in Chrétien de Troyes's *Erec et Enide* and *Chevalier au Lion*.

yet Didon lacks moderation and forgets her political duties (Adams 117). Moreover, the major obstacle to her plan is that Enéas claims it is his destiny to leave Carthage. Didon's passion only grows as she talks to her sister (v. 1468-1469), and the narrator states that love has made Didon mad (v. 1493).[89] She is powerless, hopeless, no longer politically capable of ruling (v. 1496-1497), and "unskilled in the arts of love, [Didon] succumbs to her illness and her political skill is drastically damaged" (Adams 108).[90]

Didon's lack of moderation is obvious as her sickness consumes her and the narrator states that she abandons everything for Enéas (v. 1509). Instead of governing her emotions and her land, she loses control of both. Moreover, Enéas does not reciprocate her feelings. The narrator states that Enéas changes color in Didon's presence due to love (v. 1572-1573),[91] but his symptoms seem to be more from lust, and Didon misinterprets his behavior, declaring that he is her spouse (v. 1617). He shows compassion when he is truly tormented and anxious to leave her behind, but interestingly, he never faints, and love does not compel him to stay. Adams adds that "Dido's love is excessively passionate while Eneas's is the opposite: devoid of passion" (113). While Didon's continual fainting dramatically illustrates her uncontrollable passion, Enéas's lack of fainting becomes an indicator of his true feelings. As he leaves Carthage, Didon proclaims that love is killing her, faints, and loses her senses, "Elle plore, gient et souspire, / encore vouloit assez plus dire / quant la repristrent pasmisons / qui li tolirent ses raisons" (v. 1940-1943). However, her attempt at manipulation and pity from losing consciousness does not succeed

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89 "Amors le fait de saige folle" (v. 1493).

90 Wack suggests that courtliness can control love, and that is why lovesickness and "courtly love" are often linked (30). On the other hand, Jones states that the relationship between Didon and Enéas can be seen as "the failure of chivalrous and courtly behavior (in the sense of courtliness) to help in the problems of personal relationships" (33). In the *Roman d'Enéas*, it seems that love, at least *fole amors*, with fainting and the other symptoms, destroys the "courtoise" Didon and causes her to be unable to govern.

91 "Quant il la vit, pour seue amor / li est muee la coulor" (v. 1572-1573).

because Enéas leaves. On a narrative level, Didon's fainting again cuts short her mourning because she can no longer speak, and the scene transitions to Enéas's departure. Anna now begs in vain for Enéas to stay while Didon continues to faint in her room, "Dydo se pame, color mue" (v. 1986). Awakening from this loss of consciousness, Didon secretly prepares for her death, and the narrator further explains love's effects:

> Amor le fait souvent pamer,
> et refroidir et tressuer:
> elle tort poinz et ront sa crine,
> a la manche du blanc ermine
> le racenne .C. foys et cent,
> mais ce ne li monte nïent,
> car ne peut pas retorner (v. 2042-2048).

Didon's fainting begins as a symptom of lovesickness, turns to a final desperate plea, but now illustrates her lack of moderation in love (v. 1965) and her desperation as she proclaims that love has defeated her.

In her final act of despair, she pretends to burn all of the items Enéas left behind, but she stabs herself and falls into the flames. The narrator states that Didon lacked reason in love and loved rashly (v. 2228-2229)[92]. Just as the difference between *fol'amors* and *leal amors* is evident in *Pyrame et Thisbé*, Didon clearly illustrates *fol'amors*, or rash love, mainly because her love is not mutual (Jones 38). Syncope serves an essential narrative role because it allows the narrator to effectively convey Didon's overwhelming emotions and her loss of control, both politically and bodily. Her uncontrollable fainting as she is unable to remain conscious mimics her inability to

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[92] "mais elle ama trop follement, / saviors ne li valut neant"

master love and convince Enéas to stay. The almost 2000 verses[93] covering Enéas's stay in Carthage recount little more than how Enéas came to Carthage and Didon's torments, and fainting effectively delays narrative time in order to focus on the emotional turmoil.

The relationship of Enéas and Lavine offers a stark contrast, as Lavine receives an education in love from her mother, the Queen, before love's arrow strikes. Since King Latinus has broken his oath and has now promised his land and daughter to Enéas, the Queen's main goal is to persuade Lavine to marry Turnus instead because she is aware of what happened to Didon. When the Queen says that the heart will teach her daughter about love because words cannot adequately describe it, Lavine does not understand and believes that she can simply ignore it.[94] Still insisting that words cannot describe love, the Queen attempts to describe its nature and the suffering it causes. As the Queen says her daughter could better understand if she were sick, Lavine thinks that love is a sickness (v. 7980-7981).[95] The Queen quickly distinguishes it from any other malady, and lists the symptoms of a fever, cold sweats, shivering, trembling, becoming

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[93] v. 262 when the messengers discover Carthage to v. 2230 when Enéas sails away. (v. 677 is when Enéas greets Didon for the first time).

[94] …-Di le moy,
que est amors? Ne say par foy.
- Je nel te puis mie descrire.
-Qu'en savray dont, se ne l'oy dire?
-Ton cuer t'aprendra a amer.
-Si n'en orray autre parler?
-Tu nel savras ja par parolle.
-Touz temps en cuit dont estre folle.
-Ainz en porras tost estre apprise.
-Comefaitement, se n'i sui mise?
-Commence, assez en savras puis.
-Et je comment, quant je ne truis
qui me die que est amors?
-Je te diray de ses dolors;
de sa nature, que j'en say: (v. 7953-7967).

[95] "est dont amors enfermetez? / -Nenil, mais moult petit en faut" (v. 7980-7981).

agitated, shuddering, changing color, fainting, sobbing, insomnia, crying, moaning, complaining, becoming pale, and worrying.

> D'amor estuet souvent suer
> et refroidier, fremir trambler,
> et degeter et ressaillir,
> muer coulor et espamir,
> segloutre, veillier et plorer,
> giembre, plaindre, palir, penser:
> ce li estuet faire souvent
> qui bien aime et qui s'en sent (v. 7985-7992).

As Edmond Faral shows, the twelfth-century French poet reflects Ovid's descriptions of love and appears as a doctor of hearts (*Recherches* 120). Like a doctor, the Queen lists symptoms and then describes the treatment. Interestingly, the Queen's statement that words are inadequate to explain love and her description of the external signs elucidate literature's frequent use of fainting to depict an internal state that is difficult to put into words. The spectacle of a collapsing character effectively conveys hidden emotions better than words alone.

Lavine fears suffering, but the Queen reassures her that even though love injures, it brings its own cure without using herbs or medicine (v. 8032-8034).[96] Soon after, despite her plan to avoid it, Lavine sees Enéas and is quickly struck by love's arrow against her will (v. 8122-8123). Love begins with the eyes, following Andreas Capellanus's definition that it is a natural passion beginning with sight, and Enéas's image is engraved on Lavine's heart. She displays the same symptoms as Didon and those that her mother listed, especially fainting,

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[96] "a chascun mal fait sa mecine; / n'i estuet oingement n'entrait, / la plaie sane qu'il a fait"

D'illuec esgarda la aval,
elle commence à tressuer,
a refroidier et a trambler,
souvent se pame et tressaut,
seglout, fremist, li cuers li faut,
degete soy, soufle et baaille:
bien l'a Amors mis en sa taille.
Crie, ploure, gemist et brait;
elle ne set qui ce lui fait
ne qui son coraje commuet;
demente soy, quant parler puet: (v. 8134-8144).[97]

When Lavine regains consciousness, her suffering confuses her, but she soon understands her mother's advice. Despite her guilt for having looked at Enéas, she concludes that she is learning a lesson and asks love to heal her wound (v. 8251-8252). Unlike the hopelessness of Didon, Lavine knows that love will bring the remedy, even though she doubts its ability to do so because it is not immediate. The monologues of Didon, then Lavine, and finally Enéas as we will see, serve an essential role in the romance because they reveal the internal struggles and develop the characteristics of lovesickness.[98] Similar to the *planctus* scenes in the epics or hagiography in which a character faints and awakens to lament the deceased, syncope precedes the lovers' monologues, as they faint and then awaken to lament their own suffering. Another interesting

[97] As previously mentioned, the symptom of yawning, "baaille," is a notable addition of the French poet.

[98] Aimé Petit notes that the author of *Enéas* introduces the love monologues that Chrétien de Troyes will employ (18).

similarity is that syncope both from distress and love begins with the sight of the deceased or loved one.

In addition to being a key element of love longing and a symptom of lovesickness, fainting also renders it impossible for characters to hide their true feelings. Knowing that her mother disapproves of her relationship with Enéas, Lavine worries that her symptoms will betray her as she changes color, shivers, trembles, faints, sighs, and becomes pale.

> El me verra coulor muer,
>
> fremir, trambler et espamir,
>
> et souspirer, taindre, palir;
>
> se je li coil, bien le savra
>
> a ceuz samblans qu'elle verra (v. 8304-8308).

Interestingly, Lavine uses the verb "espamir" to describe her loss of consciousness, and the first time this verb appears is when the Queen lists fainting as one of love's symptoms (v. 7987). While the poet uses the traditional verb "pamer" each time Lavine actually loses consciousness, Lavine's use of "espamir" shows that she repeats the lesson from her mother.

Lavine's symptoms continue,[99] and as expected, the Queen notices her change in behavior (v. 8527-8530). Denying love is unsuccessful because the evidence is visible in weakness, paleness, and the fact that Lavine appears to be dying even though she is healthy (v. 8560-8566).[100] The Queen's observation functions as a sort of medical diagnosis as she identifies her daughter's malady. However, she mistakenly believes that Lavine loves Turnus and becomes

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[99] She again faints when she doubts love, and faints and falls backwards because Enéas leaves without looking at her, "arriere chiet, si est pasmee" (v. 8395). Also, ignoring the fact that her symptoms will make her love evident, Lavine struggles with revealing her love, is absorbed in a trance-like state staring out the window, cannot sleep, and faints when she realizes Enéas is not with her, "Et quant elle s'apercevoit / qu'il n'i ert pas, si se pamoit" (v. 8471-8472).

[100] "l'en puet veoir appertement / a ce que pale es et vaine / que tu te muers et si es saine, / que bian aimes, n'as autre mal" (v. 8560-8563).

angry when Lavine stutters and reveals Enéas's name. As we will see in chapter three, this motif of misinterpreting the source of love or even the type of emotions continues in Chrétien de Troyes and often creates parody. For example, Fénice faints when Cligès is injured in battle, but no one suspects her love because they think that she is so compassionate that she would faint for any knight. In the *Roman d'Enéas,* this scene accentuates the drama and gravity of emotions as Lavine claims that it is all happening against her will (v. 8700-8701), asks love to be gentle, and illustrates the uncontrollable force by fainting (v. 8715). While syncope temporarily cuts her lamenting short, it creates a transition for the mother to leave, and Lavine faints seven more times, in a manner similar to the *chansons de geste* that punctuates the depth of her love.

"…Amor, des or me clain par toy,
Amor, ne faire tel desroy!
Plus souavet .I. poy me maine!"
A icest mot perdi s'alaine
et pasme soy; seule la lait
la roÿnne et si s'en vait;
en autre chambre en est entree.
.VII. foys s'est Lavine paumee,
ne puet durer n'en repoz estre (v. 8711-8719).

The Queen's departure highlights her belief that love is not a mortal illness (v. 8564) because she shows no concern for her daughter's condition. Continual fainting in literature often causes other characters to worry as they fear that the character is dying. As an early nineteenth-century medical treatise shows, Hippocrates believed that repeated fainting without an external cause is a sign of approaching death (Domecq 25), and it is logical that a loss of consciousness would

cause concern. In the *Roman d'Enéas,* Lavine's fainting does not have an external cause, but the Queen knows the internal source and leaves her daughter.

As Lavine awakens from this final sequence of fainting, she realizes the need for action and refuses to continue suffering (v. 8765). To this point, Lavine's situation resembles Didon's because she thinks death may be the only remedy (v. 8317-8318), enters trances thinking about Enéas, faints several times, and doubts his love, even though the two have never met (Adams 127). Yet after nearly 600 verses of suffering,[101] she takes the initiative, reveals her love to Enéas in a letter written in Latin, and attaches the letter to an arrow. Adams states that Lavine learns the art of love and "learns to master her own desire by writing about it, but more important, by seducing Eneas into reading her own love discourse, she arouses a passion in him that she quickly shows him how to manage" (125). Lavine recognizes her love and seeks a cure by desiring Enéas to love her in return. This final scene of syncope for Lavine functions as a narrative prosthesis to propel Lavine to action, transition to Enéas's lovesickness, and heal both lovers.

Originally thinking Turnus has violated the battle truce, Enéas finds the arrow and reads the letter, but tries to hide the truth from his men. When he sees Lavine watching him, he falls in love due to her image now engraved on his heart (v. 8971-8972), and the expected symptoms such as fainting occur.

> Amors le faisoit tressüer,
> Amors le faisoit trespenser,
> et refroidier et espamir,
> et souspirer et tressaillir.

[101] Verses 8137-8719 describe her first faint to when she faints seven times.

Amors l'argüe et commuet,

tressaut, que reposer ne puet;

en son seant se rest assis,

moult estoit mornes et pensis, (v. 8983-8990).[102]

When Enéas regains consciousness he reproaches love for treating him so harshly, but ironically, he truly thinks that Lavine's arrow has wounded him. However, he soon understands the letter is to blame since the arrow did not actually touch him (v. 9014-9025). From his reaction of confusion, Enéas obviously did not receive an education of love like Lavine. As he suffers from doubt wondering if she loves him, he quickly realizes that he never truly loved Didon because he would not have been able to leave Carthage if he had (v. 9091-9094). Fainting becomes the true symbol of love as it represents overwhelming, uncontrollable emotions that cannot remain hidden, and is the key difference in Enéas's behavior while thinking about Didon and Lavine. He changes color when he sees Didon, but faints when he falls in love with Lavine.

Love gives Enéas strength to fight Turnus, but he struggles with revealing his love, continues his monologue, faints, and cannot sleep.[103] The next morning he is unable to mount his horse, and his fellow knights worry that his sickness will keep him from fighting (v. 9161-9162). Unlike the Queen, the knights are not able to decipher his symptoms. Enéas, however, soon knows the difference between an arrow wound and love's stronger arrow, as his emotional turmoil causes him more pain than his battle injury. As the reputed doctor, Iapyx, quickly heals the arrow wound in his arm (v. 9604-9616, 9976-9983), medicine can only heal him physically.

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[102] The narrator again uses the verb "espamir" for fainting, highlighting the symptom of lovesickness.

[103] As he struggles with revealing his love to Lavine, he decides that the man must never reveal his love first, and faints remembering what she looks like, "lors l'en souvint, si se pama / et rechaÿ ou lit arriere" (v. 9152-9153). Mirroring Lavine's monologue where she falls backwards, the poet uses the same language to describe Enéas's falling fainted on the bed. The lovers share a mutual love, but also a mutual suffering.

Enéas defeats Turnus, but deeply regrets not talking to Lavine immediately after the battle and his lamenting continues. Finally, desiring to put an end to his suffering,[104] he sends her a ring as a token of his love and she reciprocates the gift. Both Enéas and Lavine proclaim that they are healed (v. 10230-10231/10294-10296). Their mutual love brings a quick halt to their suffering, their fainting, and the text, as the story concludes with the marriage and Enéas becoming king after the death of Latinus.

In this *roman d'antiquité*, the poet's emphasis on love is obvious and his use of syncope serves several critical roles. Culturally, the similar descriptions of lovesickness highlight a unique relationship between medical treatises and literary texts. On a narrative level, the spectacle of fainting creates a pause and redirects the reader's attention to the suffering that love causes, while also propelling the narration forward by creating transitions in the text, cutting short scenes of mourning that seemingly would never cease, and compelling Lavine and Enéas to act and end their suffering. For characterization, fainting not only dramatically and effectively illustrates true inner emotions and love's uncontrollable force, but allows a valuable comparison between the characters. Didon is unable to manage her love, but Lavine receives an education and handles her symptoms. Enéas's loss of consciousness proves to be the most critical as he literally awakens to suffer from love, but metaphorically awakens[105] to realize that he never truly loved Didon.

Moreover, the elements of courtly love are evident in the *Roman d'Enéas* and the poet calls both Enéas and Lavine "cortois(e)." Jones shows that the romance has elements of the

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[104] Enéas's suffering compels him to act, but the narrative prosthesis functions in a slightly different way. While Lavine awakens from her fainting and acts, Enéas's suffering continues, excluding fainting. Once the final battle begins with Turnus, Enéas does not faint, but has other symptoms such as trembling with fever (v. 10080). While suffering compels both lovers to act, Lavine's actions immediately follow fainting, while Enéas's do not.

[105] This term, used by Donald Maddox, is discussed more thoroughly in chapter three with Chrétien de Troyes.

chanson de geste and an understanding of courtly love (42), but that Lavine is not an inaccessible lady in the way of courtly literature, as both Lavine and Enéas have obstacles to overcome, and both characters develop throughout the story (41).[106] For this study on syncope, whether the *Roman d'Enéas* is strictly a courtly work or contains elements of courtliness is not the most essential. However, as the elements of courtliness increase and transition from the *chanson de geste* to courtly literature, the psychological descriptions become more complex, and fainting becomes more common, as we see in *Enéas*. The motif of fainting shifts from a loss of consciousness due to complete distress, to a symptom of lovesickness, and the *Roman d'Enéas* illustrates both uses in the characters of Didon and Lavine. Similar to *Pyrame et Thisbé* as the characters discover love, the difference between foolish love and mutual love is evident. Didon's love is more foolish, and "the difference between the two women is that only Lavine manages to apply *ars* to her amor" (Adams 130).

As literature and medicine begin to correlate, it is interesting to note the increased mention of treatments, doctors, and sickness in general in literature. In her study on lovesickness, Wack states that Ovid's love poetry influenced the medical tradition because it "proved a locus for interchange between medical and liteary views of love" (15). As we have seen with the symptoms of lovesickness, it appears that literature's descriptions affect the way in which it was also described in medicine, and vice versa. Lovesickness and its treatments continue in the *Lais* of Marie de France, and the *Roman d'Enéas* influences the courtly romances that follow, especially those of Marie de France and Chrétien de Troyes (Petit 20).

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[106] Jones shows that the fourteenth-century D manuscript is the manuscript used for most editions, including Aimé Petit's edition, and provides further courtly references because Enéas "makes amends for his slight of Lavine" (42). Enéas errs when he wins the battle against Turnus, but does not talk to Lavine or look in her direction, which causes Lavine to doubt his love (v. 9929-9932).

Lais of Marie de France

In the *Lais* of Marie de France, dating around 1170, the shifting themes, style, and focus on women from the feudal epics to the courtly narratives continue to be evident. Additionally, with the prevalence of lovesickness, it is most notably the symptom of fainting that continues to unveil true love. Marie de France employs syncope in seven of her twelve *lais*, and there are eleven instances of fainting with the verb "pasmer," two faints expressed with a different expression, four trance-like states of syncope, one instance of a character pretending to faint, and eight instances in which a character causes confusion and resembles an unconscious state, either by paleness or death. Most commonly, Marie uses the motif to express suffering after the loss of a loved one, whether by death or circumstance. The *lais* contain heightened emotions relating to love, and as Laurence Harf-Lancner explains, "les héros des lais…sont en quête de bonheur [et] ils le trouvent dans l'amour…Mais cet amour est indissociable de la souffrance" (17). Resembling the first loss of consciousness in the *Vie de saint Alexis*, Marie frequently states that a character falls fainted, using a form of the verbs "choir" and "pasmer." She also employs similar expressions of lovesickness, seen in *Pyrame et Thisbé* and the *Roman d'Enéas*, and the reader can understand the complete distress of the lovesick characters.

In her prologue, Marie de France explains the role of expanding upon and interpreting ancient works, as she states that writers can "gloser la letre" (v. 15).[107] Furthermore, she says that she had the idea to compose a good story, translating from Latin to French the tales that she has heard.[108] Marie then uses the same technique of *amplificatio* as the authors of the *romans*

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[107] All citations come from Harf-Lancner's edition.

[108] Pur ceo començai a penser
d'alkune bone estoire faire
e de Latin en Romanz traire;
mais ne me fust guaires de pris:
itant s'en sunt alter entremis.

d'antiquité and *Pyrame et Thisbé* to extend her oral tales, and she writes in the form a *lai*, which Harf-Lancner defines as "une spécialité bretonne, une œuvre à dominante musicale, liée à une aventure légendaire…" (14), with a dominant narrative element.

Marie de France describes the emotions of her characters, while also adding details relating to the medical culture of the twelfth century. In addition to herbal healing to treat a fainted state, the *Lais* mention potions to heal lovesickness and the treatment of bleeding used to purge the humors.[109] In two of her *lais*, these elements become central to the story, and suggest Marie's awareness of medical treatments. In *Equitan*, for example, a courtly knight, suffering from lovesickness, pretends to be bled in private in order to visit the wife of his seneschal.[110] His suffering contains Ovid's symptoms of love (Jones 71), as love's arrow hits him, he cannot sleep, he is in a trance-like state, and trembles due to pain (v. 58-73). To cure his lovesickness, Equitan convinces the lady to love him, and the two plot to kill the seneschal by suggesting he be bled and then take a bath. In the end, the plot fails as the seneschal discovers his wife's infidelity, and, due to shock, Equitan accidentally jumps into the boiling bath prepared for the seneschal. The medical treatment of bleeding is central because it functions as a narrative prosthesis for Equitan to be with his lover, as well as a means to get rid of the husband.

In another *lai*, Marie again uses a medical treatment to propel the narration. In *Les Dous Amanz*, a protective king promises to give his daughter in marriage to the man who can carry her up the mountain without stopping. When the young daughter secretly falls in love with a man too weak to carry her, she seeks a potion from a female relative who knows all the remedies of

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Des lais pensai qu'oïz aveie (*prologue* v. 28-33).

[109] See Hildegard of Bingen's *Causae et curae* (142) mentioned in the introduction of this study.

[110] The tale contains elements of courtly love, as Equitan claims that he is helping the young lady's *curteisie* by being her lover (v. 83-86), and that he will be his lady's vassal (v. 175).

plants, and practices medicine in Salerno (v. 103-108). The city of Salerno was central to medical progress, knowledge, and culture. Beginning in the ninth century, four masters of Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew origins founded the school of Salerno (Imbault-Huart 19). As discussed in the introduction of this study, as Constantine the African and other medical authorities translated medical treatises into Latin during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, medicine began to spread to the West (Jackson 48), and the first universities of medicine appeared in Salerno, Bologna, and Paris (Wickersheimer 7). The twelfth century also saw the popularity of the herbals, such as the *Circa Instans* by Platearius and the *Antidotarium Nicolai* by Nicolaus Praepositus (Nicolas de Salerne). Moreover, Trotula of Salerno is said to have been the first female professor of medicine and to have written a treatise on women's medicine, *De passionibus mulierum* (Green xi).[111] Therefore, the fact that Marie de France mentions both the herbals from the city of Salerno and a woman practitioner shows that she was very much attuned to the medical culture of her day.

In *Les Dous Amanz*, the young lover returns from Salerno with a potion to make him strong enough to carry his lady up the mountain. Unfortunately, resembling the *folie* of other young lovers in literature (Jones 76), he ignores the importance of moderation, as Marie states (v. 189), does not use the potion, and falls dead once he reaches the summit, "iluec cheï, puis ne leva" (v.214). As is common in the *Lais* and imaginative literature in general, the young girl mistakenly thinks he is unconscious, "quida quil fust en pasmeisuns" (v. 217). In vain, she gives him the potion, but then dies as a result of her extreme devotion. This scene is similar to Aude's death in the *Chanson de Roland* and Thisbé's in *Pyrame et Thisbé*, as death and fainting are confused and the young girl immediately dies after her loved one.

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[111] Green provides the Trotula treatises, and the book on the conditions of women, *Liber de sinthomatibus mulierum,* lists syncope as a symptom of uterine suffocation (83).

Adapting the motif of the mourning mother, the girl's father then arrives and faints at the sight of his dead daughter, "Le reis cheit a terre pasmez" (v. 242). While this *lai* does not provide details of a *planctus* scene, Marie notes that strangers joined in a three-day mourning period before the burial, thus evoking the same atmosphere. In *Les Dous Amanz*, fainting is an effective narrative device to illustrate intense suffering caused by both passionate and familial love. The similarities with several other texts help Marie establish a tone of suffering, young love, and loss.

Love-longing and loss is evident in several of Marie's *Lais*, such as *Guigemar* that shows a lovesick woman unable to stay on her feet and lost in thought until she is reunited with her lover,[112] or *Chaitivel* that tells the story of a woman loved by four men who remains in a continuous trance-like state of mourning after the death of three of the men.[113] A similar state occurs in *Eliduc*, as Guilliadon remains in an unconscious state for most of the tale due to a

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[112] In the tale, Guigemar injures himself while hunting a doe and learns that only a woman who suffers due to love will be able to heal his wound. Looking for love, he falls asleep in a small boat that guides him to the land where an old jealous husband is guarding his young wife. This woman finds Guigemar, but thinks he is dead until she discovers that his chest is warm and his heart is beating (v. 299-301). Symptoms of lovesickness quickly ensue, and Guigemar must flee to keep their love hidden. As a sign of their love, Guigemar has a knot in his shirt that only the woman can undo, and she wears a belt that only he can remove. Marie describes the weakened state of the lovesick woman who is unable to stay on her feet, is pensive, and pale. The woman chases after Guigemar, gets on a boat, and cannot remain standing, "dunc ne puet ester sur ses piez" (v. 684). It is clear that she loses consciousness because her collapse prevents her from throwing herself overboard in despair, and the scene transitions to Mériaduc, who also falls in love. She rejects Mériaduc, and almost faints when she hears that a man in the country will only love the woman who unties his shirt, "Quant el l'oï, si suspira, / pur un petit ne se pasma. / Il la reçut entre ses braz" (v. 735-737). Time passes, but the text does not mention the woman regaining consciousness. When she reappears, she is pensive, pale, and still in a trance-like state, "la dame fu pensive e pale" (v. 764). She hears Guigemar introduced at a tournament, and cannot stand on her feet, "ne pout desur ses piez ester" (v. 766). The collapse redirects Guigemar's attention, and the woman's pensive trance only breaks when she is able to untie the knot on his shirt. In the end, Guigemar defeats the jealous Mériaduc and wins the lady. Comparable to Thisbé, syncope effectively illustrates lovesickness, and functions as a narrative prosthesis to drive the narration as the reader anticipates the moment when the woman's extended trance-like state will be broken and the lovers reunited.

[113] Another instance of a woman's extended trance occurs in *Chaitivel*. Four barons compete in a tournament for the love of a beautiful lady, who refuses to choose one man. However, three are killed and one is injured in the thigh. As the bodies of the three enter the city, the lady hears the news and faints, "Des qu'ele sot cele aventure, / pasmee chiet a terre dure" (v. 143-144). The text uses the same expression first seen in the *Vie de saint Alexis* to express grief from devastating news. The lady awakens to give a *planctus* (v. 145-146), and continues to be lost in thought, "forment comença a penser" (v. 185), with her prolonged trance mimicking fainting resembling the woman in *Guigemar*. Unlike *Alexis*, there is no interjection to stop her mourning, and the surviving knight says he is the most unfortunate since his lady is in continuous despair. Marie seems to critique prolonged mourning, as the lady's love game leaves her without a lover.

shocking revelation about her love. The story begins when Eliduc, rejected by his king, decides to help a nearby king protect his land and defeat the invading enemy. He and the king's daughter, Guilliadon, immediately fall in love, even though he desires to remain faithful to his wife, Guildeluec. However, when Eliduc must return home to help his king defend the land, Guilliadon decides to accompany him and discovers that he is married. This shocking revelation causes her to faint and remain unconscious.

The reader understands the love between Guilliadon and Eliduc, as love begins at first sight and causes Guilliadon to sigh and become pale, and Eliduc to be pensive and somber (v. 304-318). The Ovidian descriptions of lovesickness are obvious as Guilliadon cannot sleep and worries that Eliduc will not love her in return (v. 331-350). The two are in a sort of shared syncope,[114] but Eliduc is torn between his duty to remain loyal to his wife and his love for Guilliadon. He serves his lady and looks after her, but cannot and will not marry her since the Christian religion does not allow it (v. 602). Similar to the lovesick lovers that we have already examined, Guilliadon loses color and faints from suffering when Eliduc tells her that he must leave, "se pasma ele de dolur/ e perdi tute sa culur" (v. 661-662). Contrary to Enéas who leaves the fainted Didon in the *Roman d'Enéas*, Eliduc truly loves Guilliadon, and her collapse evokes pity, as he cries and holds her fainted body until she regains consciousness, "Quant Elidus la veit pasmer, / si se cumence a dementer / … / entre ses braz la prist e tint, / tant que de pasmeisuns revint" (v. 663-664, 667-668). While a difficult revelation causes Guilliadon to lose consciousness, this event foreshadows what will happen when she will discover more devastating news. True to *fin'amor*, Eliduc serves his lady and promises to obey, but his feudal

[114] As mentioned in *Pyrame et Thisbé*, Catherine Clément uses this term to describe the effects of love at first sight that cause the world to seemingly disappear (33).

duty of returning to serve his king is equally as important, and being sure of his love, Guilliadon allows him to leave (v. 698).

When Eliduc returns to visit Guilliadon after a miserable stay in his country, the two lovers escape together, but a violent storm at sea causes a sailor to blame Eliduc for the misfortune. As he reproaches the married Eliduc for trying to escape with another lady, Guilliadon learns the unrevealed truth about her lover and falls fainted, "Desur sun vis cheï pasmee, / tute pale, desculuree / En la pasmeisun demura, / qu'el ne revint ne suspira." (853-856). Unlike the previous collapse, Guilliadon does not regain consciousness or appear to be breathing, and seeing her fainted and seemingly dead body provokes intense suffering in Eliduc. Resembling the battle scenes in the epics or similar situations in the *romans d'antiquité* in which mourning characters seek revenge on the enemy, Eliduc laments and immediately seeks revenge by throwing overboard the sailor who revealed his secret. Guilliadon's collapse causes Eliduc to lose control, and his lamentations and violent action prove not only his love, but also his duty to serve and protect his lady.

The confusion between a fainted and dead state is once again evident as Guilliadon remains unconscious, "Encore jut ele en pasmeisun, / ne not semblant se de mort nun" (v. 871-872), but Eliduc's men think that she is dead. Eliduc suffers greatly, worries that his secret love will be further revealed, and blames himself for her death.[115] When he returns the next day, he is shocked to find that she still has her color, both white and red, and is only a little pale. However, Guilliadon will not awaken and is not breathing,

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[115] Suffering severely and knowing that he left in secret with the daughter of a king, Eliduc does not know what to do with the body and fears that his secret love will be revealed. His distress only increases as his men cannot offer advice and he cannot build an abbey because the hermit died a few days previously. In his continued mourning, Eliduc confesses that if Guilliadon had never seen him, they would have never fallen in love, and she would still be alive. Interestingly, Eliduc's men want to bury Guilliadon, but he refuses until he can build an abbey or church in her honor. Eliduc, who thinks that he has killed the young girl, is actually saving her life.

En la pasmeisun la trovot:

ne reveneit, ne suspirot.

De ceo li semblot granz merveille

qu'il la veeit blanche e vermeille;

unkes la colur ne perdi

fors un petit qu'ele enpali (v. 969-974).

The color of the skin is a good medical indicator of life or death, and Guilliadon's coloring understandably shocks Eliduc. According to Hildegard of Bingen, the red color of the cheeks is a sign of life of the soul, "un souffle igné de vie, c'est à dire de l'âme" (244), and Guilliadon's coloring suggests that her soul has not yet left her body.[116] The following lines reveal that Eliduc prays for Guilliadon's soul, "Mult anguissusement plurot / e pur l'alme de li preiot" (v. 975-976), further suggesting his confusion about whether she is still alive.[117]

Due to the distress and odd behavior of her husband, Guildeluec spies on him and discovers the girl's body in the chapel. As she is mourning the beautiful girl's death, her servant kills a weasel that enters the chapel, and the weasel's companion seemingly laments, goes into the forest to find medicinal herbs (v. 1046), and returns with a red flower. The weasel then places the flower in the mouth of the deceased, and he comes back to life. Guildeluec immediately takes the flower and puts it in the mouth of Guilliadon, who starts breathing, opens her eyes, and states that she has been sleeping a long time (v. 1066). Highlighting the confusion that syncope creates,

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[116] As we will see in chapter three with Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte du Graal*, "red on white is an almost indispensable element of the standard female portrait" (Busby 43), and Perceval is fascinated by the red blood on the white snow because it makes him think of his beautiful Blanchefleur. Eliduc also falls in love with Guilliadon's beauty, and the red coloring of her cheeks that signals that she is still alive could also represent her beauty.

[117] This brief mention of the soul gives a glimpse of the medical and theological culture of the twelfth century. This again suggests that Marie de France references the culture of her day, as the debate about the union of the body and soul was very common in medieval theology (Ribémont 189). Byzantine medicine also greatly influenced the School of Salerno, and Christ is the healer of the body and the soul (Imbault-Huart 16, 162).

the text relates sleep, fainting, and death. Guilliadon thinks she was only sleeping when she awakens, but then says that she fainted when she heard the news that Eliduc is married (v.1080).[118] Furthermore, Guildeluec reveals that Eliduc thinks Guilliadon is dead (v. 1089), but returns to find her body fainted each day (v. 1091).[119] Just as the reader is uncertain if Guilliadon is alive, fainted, or dead, Marie uses the three states interchangeably to emphasize that the characters were unable to understand Guilliadon's true state.

Critics frequently analyze the healing ability of the weasel and the red flower in *Eliduc*. According to the thirteenth-century *Livre du Trésor* by Brunetto Latini, the weasel has powers to revive, but no one knows how or by what medicine (220). Herbals list numerous flowers and herbs that can cure syncope, yet it is difficult, as stated in the *Livre du Trésor*, to know the specific flower mentioned. In her article on the weasel, Danielle Gurevitch gives diverse possibilities for the red flower, such as the rose and red verbena (212).[120] Hildegard of Bingen says that the flower by itself cannot heal, but that the flower and the weasel together are able to revive (Throop 224, qtd. in Gurevitch 219). The difficulty of identifying the exact flower, and the diversity of critical opinions highlight that the symbolism is more important. Gurevitch shows that the weasel changes its home frequently and states that the text's main theme is the movement from one home to another, while the red color of the flower symbolizes Christ's crucifixion. Guildeluec is the pious example to follow and eventually guides the others home to God (219-222).

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[118] "'Deus,' fete le, 'tant ai dormi!'" (v. 1066); "Quant de sa femme oï parler, / de duel que oi m'estut pasmer" (v. 1079-1080).

[119] "Il quide que vus seize morte, / a merveille se descunforte; / chescun jur vus a reguardee, / bien quid qu'il vus trova pasmee" (v. 1089-1092).

[120] Gurevitch's article analyzes the symbolism behind the different flowers, the red color, and her thoughts that Guilliadon's state represents hysteria. She also examines the tension between the symbolism of the weasel and the Christian tradition. Overall, she states that the *lai* illustrates repentance and salvation.

Another common belief from the bestiaries is that the weasel conceives by the ear and gives birth from the mouth (de Fournival 138) or vice versa (de Beauvais 50). Richard de Fournival in the *Bestiaire d'amour* also states that the weasel represents "une des grande raisons de désespérer en amour, à savoir qu'on ne veuille pas entendre parler de tout ce dont il est le plus nécessaire de parler, et de vouloir toujours parler d'autre chose" (139). The appearance of the weasel is therefore also fitting in *Eliduc* because Eliduc is so blinded by his love for Guilliadon that he will not reveal the truth that he is married, and as a result, Guilliadon faints from the devastating news. Following the symbolism of the red flower as Christ's blood that is the ultimate sacrifice for sin and forgiveness, Eliduc receives forgiveness. He then marries Guilliadon, and Guildeluec devotes herself to God. At the end of the text, Eliduc and Guilliadon follow her example and also devote themselves to God (v. 1177-1178).

Concerning syncope, the weasel and the red flower are the means by which Marie chooses to awaken Guilliadon. In other texts, it is necessary to simply wait for the fainted character to reawaken, or as we will see in the Chrétien de Troyes and the *Lancelot en prose*, characters splash water, make loud noises, or try inflicting pain. In *Eliduc*, fainting plays an essential role in the text as it illustrates lovesickness and a reaction to devastating news. It functions as a narrative prosthesis that drives the latter part of the *lai*, as the action centers around the fainted body of Guilliadon and exposes the characters of Eliduc and Guildeluec. Eliduc who loyally served his wife, now completely devotes his life to his fainted lover and tries to rectify his actions that seemingly kill her by wanting to build her an abbey. Guildeluec is the sacrificial wife who also laments the loss of young girl, and seemingly without jealousy, gives her husband to Guilliadon. The continual mentioning of the fainted body keeps the reader in suspense, and also confusion, since Guilliadon is assumed to be dead. The miraculous awakening

at the end of the text brings more mystery, but also provides a glimpse of the medical and social culture of the twelfth century. As all three characters join the abbey and devote their love completely to God, Christ truly is the healer of the body and the soul.

As Guilliadon collapses upon hearing that Eliduc is married, syncope continues to surround the revelation of secrets. In *Le Fraisne*, for example, a mother who had given up one of her twin daughters, faints from complete shock when many years later she realizes her daughter Frêne is still alive, "De la pitié que ele en a / ariere chiet, si se pasma" (v. 461-462).[121] Modifying the confessional space after a loss of consciousness, the mother's unexplained loss of consciousness causes confusion and she must awaken to reveal her secret to her husband and daughters. In the end, her husband forgives her and the family is happily reunited. Opposed to using a form "choir" and "pasmer" to represent a response to a devastating reality, Marie adapts the motif to depict a joyful outcome. Fainting due to joy is not a common aspect of the paradigm, and only reoccurs in the *Lancelot en prose*.

Instead of a revealed secret causing joy, complete devastation occurs when the protagonist of *Lanval* divulges his hidden love. Unlike the other *lais*, this tale takes place at Arthur's court (Harf-Lancner 14), and the courtly knight serving his lady resembles the character of Lancelot in Chrétien's *Charrette* and also the *Lancelot en prose*. In this story, Lanval falls in love with a mysterious mistress who promises him her love as long as he does not speak of their

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[121] At the beginning of the *lai*, the mother mocks the wife of a knight who had twin boys saying that her unfaithfulness caused her to have twins. When she herself becomes pregnant with twin girls, Coudrier and Frêne, she decides to kill one of the girls due to her shame. However, her young maid takes the girl to a monastery and leaves her in an ash tree, and an abbess raises the girl as her niece, calling her Frêne. When Goron later falls in love with Frêne and his men insist that he marry a lady of nobility, he must marry Coudrier. As Frêne still desires to serve Goron and prepares the wedding bed with the cloth she was wrapped in as a baby, Coudrier's mother sees the cloth and immediately begins to tremble with emotion (v. 428). When Frêne explains that the cloth and ring are hers, the mother exclaims that Frêne is her daughter and falls over backward fainted (v. 461-462). As a result, the first marriage between Coudrier and Goron is annulled and Goron and Frêne marry with an elaborate and joyous celebration.

relationship. However, he breaks his secrecy and loses his love as a result.[122] Desperate and lovesick, he pleads with his lady to return and faints, "Il se pleigneit e suspirot, / d'ures en alters se pasmot" (v. 343-344). Lanval is left in despair as his lady refuses to take pity on him (v. 351), and the scene transitions to Arthur's court where he must defend himself for insulting the queen. However, he does not take action, but remains pensive and quiet, in a trance-like state (v. 362). Finally, when he hears that his lady has arrived, he looks up and sighs (v. 609-610), signaling his awakening, as blood returns to his face, "Li sans li est muntez el vis" (v. 611), and his distress turns to joy. As the *lai* concludes, the young lady defends Lanval, he is acquitted, and reconciled to his lady as the two ride off together. Similar to the character of Lancelot that we will examine in chapter three, Lanval is characterized by trances, unaware of reality, beginning with his first meeting with the beautiful lady. Once he is convinced that their love is true, he is left in another trance when he loses his love. These trance-like instances of syncope separate him from society, as a depression or social syncope. Moreover, his repeated fainting emphasizes the depth of his love and his desperation that is only healed by his lady.

In a final example from Marie de France's *Lais*, *Yonec* contains many instances of fainting due to lost love and revealed secrets. The functions of the motif remain fairly consistent with the traditional paradigm, but one notable example shows fainting as a means to a goal.[123] In this tale, a jealous husband imprisons his beautiful young wife in the donjon with his old

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[122] In this *lai*, Arthur forgets Lanval when he gives out land and rewards. Embarrassed, Lanval leaves the court and sees two beautiful ladies and their mistress. He immediately falls in love with the mistress, but is told that he cannot reveal his love or he will lose her forever. Afraid that it is all a dream, Lanval begins to doubt, but continually receives rich gifts from his lover. The court learns of his riches and becomes curious, and Guinevere even desires his love. When he refuses, she insults him to the point that he reveals his love, saying she is superior to the queen. As the humiliated queen lies and says Lanval tried to force his love on her, the king demands that Lanval justify his actions before the court. He has lost his lady's favor and despairs until his lady returns.

[123] This function was also briefly examined with Etienne in the *Chanson d'Antioche*, as he feigns a sick, trance-like state to escape battle.

widowed sister as guard. After seven years, the miserable young wife laments her destiny and desires to die. However, one spring, as she is mourning her life and dreaming of another, a bird arrives at the window and turns into a knight. He professes his love and the two decide to become lovers as long as he professes his belief in God and takes communion. They devise a plan and the young lady claims she is sick and needs to see the priest before she dies. When the old sister does not think the sickness is serious, the lady pretends to faint, "semblant fist qu'ele se pasma" (v. 185). Frightened the lady will die, the old woman immediately calls the priest. As he gives her the host and wine, she secretly gives it to her lover. Although not part of the original plan, fainting proves to be an effective tool to illustrate the gravity of her feigned sickness. As we have seen in the *Roman d'Enéas*, fear caused by fainting is grounded in medieval medical thought since fainting without an external cause can be a sign of a deadly illness (Domecq 25). Using fainting as a means to achieve a goal becomes more common, as we will see in *Cligès* by Chrétien de Troyes.

In Marie de France's *lai*, the two lovers are happy, but the importance of moderation in love is evident, as the lady desires to see her lover too often and the old husband becomes suspicious and mortally injures the lover. The lady faints from distress, learns she will give birth to their son Yonec, [124] and follows the traces of blood to her lover's kingdom, where she faints again upon seeing his injuries.[125] Both of these instances follow the pattern of fainting after

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[124] When the lover lies dying after being mortally injured in the husband's trap, he tells the young woman that her lack of moderation would kill them. Upon hearing these words, she faints and appears to be dead, "Quant el l'oï, dunc chiet pasmee; / tute fu morte une loëe." (v. 327-328). As is common in the *Lais*, devastating news provokes an extended period of unconsciousness. Although consoling her, the young lover abruptly ends the lady's distress by saying that it is useless and revealing that she will have their son Yonec.

[125] "Avant ala tute esfreee; / par desus lui cheï pasmee" (v. 399-400). The scene parallels the previous faint, and the lady's distress is evident. Since she fears that her husband will kill her for her unfaithfulness, the lover gives her a magic ring to cause the old husband to forget the entire adventure. Finally, knowing that their son will grow up to be a great and valiant knight, the young lady leaves with a sword for their future son.

devastating news with the expression "chiet pasmee" and an interjection to stop mourning. She wants to die with her lover (v. 415), but he tells her to leave his kingdom so that the people do not harm her after his death. As she hears the sound of the bells ringing and the mourning in the castle, she faints four times as a result, "de la dolur que ele en a / quatre fiëes se pasma / E quant de pasmeisuns revint, / vers la hoge sa veie tint" (v. 453-456). Her continuous fainting conveys her intensified distress after his death, and it is the devastating news that the sound of the bells signifies, instead of the sight of her lover, that causes her collapse. The narrator says that the lady awakens, immediately continues home, lives with her husband, and raises her son. Since she must return home to raise her son and she faints alone without her lover to console her, the narrative time does not pause on the loss of consciousness to show her despair or his greatness, but accelerates to the lovers' revenge.

Yonec is now a grown, valiant knight, and discovers an elaborately decorated tomb when attending a festival in a nearby city with his mother and the old husband. The townspeople are still mourning and waiting for the knight's son to avenge his death, and the mother, apparently not recognizing the castle until now, suddenly realizes that Yonec is the one for whom the townspeople are waiting. She recounts the story to her son, gives him the sword from his father, and faints dead on her lover's tomb, "Sur la tumbe cheï pasmee; / en la pasmeisun devia: / unc puis a hume ne parla." (v. 544-546). Yonec then sees that she is dead and avenges both his mother and father's deaths by killing the old husband, and then buries his mother with his father. The narrator does not say that the lady died, but describes her death by saying that she stayed in her faint and never spoke again. Drawing on the motif of the completely devoted lover who faints dead after their lover's death,[126] the reader is able to understand this description. Fainting

[126] Examples include Aude in the *Chanson de Roland*, the four thousand women and Ismène in the *Roman de Thèbes*, and Thisbé in *Pyrame et Thisbé*.

in *Yonec* represents being close to death, as the lady feigns fainting to look like she is dying, as she loses consciousness and appears dead for a period of time, as she faints and wants to die with her lover, and finally as she falls dead on his tomb. The end of the *lai* states that those who hear the story will remember the pain and suffering of the two lovers (v. 559-562), and fainting is an essential tool to illustrate the suffering and pain.

Love is the key theme in all of the *Lais* by Marie de France as the characters search for it, desire to escape a loveless relationship, want to heal their lovesickness, and remain faithful to a lost lover. The motif of fainting emphasizes the emotions of love, while also illustrating the connections to the epic genre and the courtly love romances. Similar language and actions at the sight of a deceased loved one or after receiving devastating news relate the mourning scenes to the the epics and allow the reader to understand the intensity of the emotions. Moreover, the *Lais* convey the seriousness of lovesickness by using Ovidian descriptions and by incorporating the contemporary medical culture as the characters search for a cure. The symptoms of lovesickness, extending to a trance-like state mimicking a loss of consciousness that Marie de France introduces in her *Lais*, will become more prevalent in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes and the *Lancelot en prose*.

Conclusion

As we have seen in the *Roman de Thèbes, Pyrame et Thisbé, Roman d'Enéas,* and the *Lais* by Marie de France, syncope aids in seeing the changing tropes and themes between hagiography, the epics, the *romans d'antiquité*, and the courtly romances. As the authors of these texts use the technique of *amplificatio* and extend the stories, the motif of fainting also develops and broadens. In the *Roman de Thèbes*, war appears more futile, and the instances of collective

fainting help emphasize this point as groups of men awaken to lament, and groups of women faint. Instead of regaining consciousness to confess, men awaken in battle to forgive or reproach their enemy, and warriors on both sides of the battle lines mourn for their enemies. Fainting still allows characters to praise dying knights, but the tone changes from one of dying for an ideology to dying in a battle that should have never started. As the women begin to hold a more important role in the text, the gendered aspect of fainting becomes more prominent and the roles of mourning men and women are questioned. For twenty-six instances of syncope in *Thèbes*, the author primarily uses the verb "pasmer," but employs a form of "chiet pasmé" in four different instances, interestingly all for women characters. Moreover, the verb "s'esvanir" appears for the first time in the chosen texts of this study, and signals the weak King Adraste who faints from despair. Transitioning from the *Roman de Thèbes* to *Pyrame et Thisbé*, the character of Ismène in *Thèbes* illustrates the mourning of a lover and a medical awareness of fainting and love's symptoms that become clear in *Pyrame et Thisbé*. Adapting the Ovidian descriptions, the poet of *Pyrame* emphasizes the symptoms of love and allows the reader to understand the differences between *leal amor* and *fol'amor*. "Pasmer" is also the predominant verb in this text, with one instance of "cheï pasmez" (v. 207), and one use of the verb "s'entr'oblie" (v. 371) to indicate a trance-like state of forgetfulness. With fainting being a key symptom in lovesickness, true love is evident in the *Roman d'Enéas*, as well as the importance of an education to handle love. The characters of Didon and Lavine illustrate *fol'amor* and *leal amor*, with Enéas's fainting being a key indicator of his true love. Similar to the poet of the *Thèbes*, "pasmer" is the most common verb to describe syncope in *Enéas*, but the poet often insists on the continuous nature of fainting by saying that characters lose consciousness seven, twenty, thirty, or a thousand times. A form of "choir pasmer" is used twice (v. 6272, 8395), but the poet also employs "espamir" to indicate a

symptom of lovesickness, and "s'entroblie" to signal a trance. Finally, in the *Lais* of Marie de France, the search for love continues, and the diverse uses of the motif of fainting illustrate how Marie de France adapts her *lais* to the contemporary medical and social culture of the twelfth century. Marie also describes fainting with "pasmer," as well as using the noun "pasmeisuns" to indicate a character reawakening or staying in an unconscious state. In *Guigemar* she uses a form of the expression "ne puet ester sur ses piez" (v. 684, 766) to describe the lovesick lady's loss of consciousness, and she illustrates trance-like states with the adjectives "pensis" (*Yonec* v. 287), "esbaïz" (*Lanval* v. 199), and "trespensez" (*Eliduc* v. 314), or the verb "pensot" (*Chaitivel* v. 187). From Marie de France's *Lais*, the love trances and moderation in love, as well as fainting as a means to a goal, become more important as we move to the verse romances of Chrétien de Troyes.

Chapter Three: Fainting and Trances in Chrétien de Troyes's Romances

In the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, love is the central theme as characters must struggle to restore relationships, escape to be with a true love, hide emotions, obey a courtly lady, or understand God's love. Instead of primarily showing suffering and lovesickness as in the *romans d'antiquité*, *Pyrame et Thisbé*, and the *Lais* of Marie de France, love is the motivation of characters' actions and the psychological focus of the characters is even more important. As Raymond Cormier explains in his analysis of the *Roman d'Enéas* and *Erec et Enide*, *Enéas* is a link between the epics and courtly romances, as the epics are concerned with the "vigoureux guerrier chrétien" and the courtly romances are "embellis par le poli chevalier introspectif et conscient de soi" ("Remarques" 86). Chrétien effectively illustrates this introspective knight when characters are lost in thought and in trances. Cormier further states, "à partir de Chrétien, la littérature courtoise se livre à la spontanéité et l'indépendance vis-à-vis les modelés classiques ou épiques," but that traces of these models are still evident in his romances (86). Therefore, as this study moves from the twelfth-century works adapting classical tales to the verse romances of Chrétien de Troyes, the Ovidian descriptions of lovesickness and the traditional paradigm of syncope concerning distress are apparent. However, Chrétien will expand the motif in order to describe both love in marriage and courtly love.

In his first romance, *Erec et Enide*, Chrétien de Troyes states that a tale must have "une mout bele conjunture" (v. 14).[127] Chrétien specializes in this technique that uniquely joins diverse episodes of the story. Baumgartner notes that *conjointure* signals "la recherche d'une composition élaborée, d'une structuration neuve du matériau romanesque" (Baumgartner, *Yvain* 10). Douglas Kelly more specifically defines the term and states that it relates to the meaning of

[127] All citations for *Erec et Enide* come from Jean-Marie Fritz's edition.

the Latin *iunctura,* and is the "interlacing of different elements derived from the source or sources" (200). Beginning with *Erec et Enide,* Chrétien uses this technique as he intertwines the stories and characters to create a cohesive and coherent story. Other storytellers, as he says, only corrupt the text (*Erec* v. 21). Interestingly, Chrétien uses this *conjointure* within each work, but also between the romances from *Erec et Enide* to the *Conte du Graal*, as certain characters such as Gauvain reappear in each text (Fritz 17, 21). Syncope becomes an important element of Chrétien's craft of *conjointure* as he repeats different instances to highlight characters, themes, and transformations. While his romances *Erec et Enide, Cligès,* the *Chevalier au Lion,* the *Chevalier de la Charrette,* and the *Conte du Graal* provide numerous instances of syncope, this chapter will focus on major episodes. An overview of all five romances clearly presents syncope as a critical element in Chrétien's works, while the final two works will allow a comparison to the Arthurian *Lancelot en prose* in the final chapter of this study.

Erec et Enide

Written in 1170, *Erec et Enide* is the story of Erec, son of Lac, who meets a generous vassal and his beautiful daughter, Enide, on his quest to find the dwarf that offended the queen. When Erec defeats the dwarf's master, his victory brings him honor and the opportunity to marry Enide. Due to his extreme love for her, the valiant Erec soon becomes indifferent and no longer proves his knightly prowess. His *recreantise,* or idleness because of cowardice or physical weakness (Burgess 49), brings him shame before others at court, including his wife. One night when Erec awakens to hear his wife weeping, Enide breaks her silence and tells her husband that he is losing his reputation at court. Knowing that his *recreantise* is a result of his extreme devotion, she instantly regrets revealing Erec's shame for abandoning his knightly duties.

Moreover, her guilt is justified because she does not fulfill her role as a loyal wife when she participates in, and repeats, the slanderous accusations about her husband (Burgess 52-53; Topsfield 33). As the two leave for adventure to regain Erec's knightly reputation, Erec undergoes many tests of valor with the final quest at the *Joie de la Cort*, and the couple encounters many trials of love. Just as Erec is overly devoted to love and neglects his duty, he then completely focuses on his prowess and the couple must work to restore their relationship.

Throughout this romance, Chrétien uses nine instances of the motif of fainting in order to emphasize distress, injury, or fear.[128] These examples follow the traditional paradigm of syncope, with Chrétien employing the verb "pasmer" or a form of "choir pasmer," as the intensity of the emotions and injury are dramatically apparent. These instances become an integral part of the romance as they parody episodes of distress,[129] allow Erec to prove that he is not *recreant*,[130] and provide characters an opportunity to realize their guilt and change their behavior. [131] This study

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[128] Distress: King Lac and the court (v. 2744), Enide (v. 4615, 4646, 4730), Erec (v. 4848); Injury: knight in battle (v. 2883), a count (v. 3612), Erec (v. 4601); Fear: Enide (v. 3713).

[129] The king, knights, and ladies cry and lament Erec and Enide's departure from court, and many faint, "Maint se pasmerent en la place" (v. 2744). Emphasizing the gravity of emotion at this classic scene at a departure, the narrator states that the distress could not have been bigger if the crowd had seen an injured or dead person (v. 2746-2747). Chrétien parodies the situation, as Erec dismisses the crowds' mourning and says that he is not a prisoner or wounded, and if he leaves, he will come back (v. 2750-2753). Similar to scenes of distress in which a character interjects, Erec himself stops the mourning because it seems unnecessary.

[130] In both *Roland* and the *Guillaume d'Orange* Roland and Vivien's prowess are evident as they faint but continue in battle. Erec proves that he is not *recreant* and shows his prowess by causing knights to faint and fall off their horses. Explaining that the horse is an essential part of the knight's profession, Keith Busy says that being unhorsed signifies defeat and a loss of an important element of the knight's identity (*Perceval* 44). For example, Enide breaks her silence to warn Erec of the three approaching knights because she doubts his ability to fight, but Erec kills the first, injuries the second causing him to faint, "Pasmé jus dou destrier l'enverse" (v. 2883), and knocks the third off his horse. While his strength obviously diminishes from the first to the third attack, Erec defeats his enemies by taking their horses, and fainting is an effective means of unhorsing a knight.

[131] Erec and Enide's host desires to take Enide away from Erec, but the two escape when Enide deceitfully convinces the count to attack Erec by surprise. The count follows with one hundred men, but during the fight, Erec unhorses and defeats him by causing him to faint from his horse, "pasmé jus dou destrier l'abat" (v. 3612). The count regains consciousness with difficulty, and realizes that he was wrong to start the battle. In addition to awakening to realize guilt, this instance of syncope serves a narrative purpose as it creates a way for Erec to be victorious over the army of a hundred men because the fainted count tells his men to stop fighting. Over the next

will focus on the striking instances surrounding Erec and Enide's transformation as a couple. Moreover, in addition to syncope as an element of *conjointure*, Chrétien emphasizes instances of fainting in the technique of the *brisure du couplet*, while also introducing a sort of literary syncope, as he cuts his own narration short in order to focus on other events.

Since Enide broke her silence and revealed Erec's *recreantise*, Erec demands that Enide remain silent unless he speaks to her first (v. 2768-2769). The motif of silence continues throughout the text and surrounds key instances of syncope. On their adventure, Enide breaks her silence each time that knights approach to attack, either because she doubts Erec's ability or from fear, and Erec's anger gradually increases the more his wife disobeys. When Guivret approaches to attack, Enide struggles to maintain her silence to the extent that she almost faints from fear, "A pou que de son palefroi / Ne cheï jus pasmee et vainne (v. 3712-3713), her blood becomes agitated, "En tot le cors de li n'ot vainne / Dont ne li remuast li sans" (v. 3714-3715), and she is deathly pale, "Plus li devint pales et blans / Li vis que se ele fust morte" (v. 3716-3717). The narrator provides a psychological description as he states that Enide has an inner battle (v. 3734), and the near fainting and paleness are external signs of her fear of the knight and her distress disobeying her husband. This scene also serves as a textual marker as it introduces Erec's battle with Guivret and foreshadows Enide's continuous fainting during Erec's extended loss of consciousness.

Following the pattern of the text, Enide breaks her silence when Guivret approaches to attack, but she justifies her actions by saying that Erec is too lost in thought to notice the need to fight, "Je voi bien que mes sire pense / Tant que soi meïsmes oblie; / Dont est bien droiz que je li die" (v. 3758-60). Erec does not notice Enide's paleness or near loss of consciousness, and her

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twenty-one lines, the count praises the wise and *cortoise* Enide who tricked him, explains that he was disloyal to attack, and states that there is no better knight than Erec.

fear grows as she sees him absorbed in a trance-like state. As we have seen in *Pyrame et Thisbé* and the *Roman d'Enéas,* the verb "oblier" emphasizes being cut off from reality in a sort of syncope.[132] Although the cause of Erec's trance is unclear, it is again Enide who notices that her husband is unmindful.[133] D.R. Sutherland analyzes literature's use of the verb "s'oblidar," and notes its different meanings in the epic or courtly literature context. She explains, "'Il ne s'oublia mie' is an epic cliché, used to introduce an account of a great exploit by an epic hero … A feudal warrior who was 'unmindful' of his duty in the epic sense would run the risk of being called *recreant* or *villain*" (169). The expression "soi meïsmes oblie" stresses Erec's unmindfulness and his trance is another instance of his *recreantise*. Enide is justified in breaking her silence because her husband once again forgets his duties.

Although angry with his wife for reminding him of his need to fight, Erec combats and defeats Guivret. The two knights show a mutual admiration, but both men sustain severe injuries, and the continual mention of Erec's weakened state becomes an element of *conjointure* that foreshadows his eventual collapse.[134] In the next encounter, Erec shows a greater focus on his knightly duties and notices the need to act before Enide must break her silence. He helps a lamenting young lady and delivers her knight from the giants, but the narrative shifts back to Erec's injuries. The narrator gives realistic details of the heat of the day and the weight of Erec's

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[132] Thisbé: "De soi meïsme s'entr'oblie" (*Pyrame* v. 371); Didon: "et quant c'est qu'elle s'entroblie" (*Enéas* v. 1319).

[133] As Fritz also states (179), the motif of the trance becomes more important in the *Chevalier de la Charrette* and the *Conte du Graal*.

[134] Mentions of injury: Erec insists on continuing on his way (v. 3929); Keu notices his wounds and tries to force him to go to Arthur (v. 3991); Erec tells Gauvain he cannot stop because of his injuries (v. 4101); Enide expresses concern for Erec's health to Gauvain (v. 4171); Gauvain notices Erec's paleness and delays him until Arthur arrives (v. 4177); Arthur and Guinevere notice his wounds, bring an ointment that Arthur's sister Morgan made (v. 4210-4214), which is the same ointment mentioned in *Chevalier au Lion*; They want him to stay fifteen days until he is healed (v. 4230-4232); They make Erec sleep alone so no one touches his wounds (v. 4267-4268); Arthur says that it would be awful if Erec dies in the forest (v. 4245-46); the entire court laments when Erec leaves as if he were dead (v. 4285-4286), mirroring the scene in which Erec leaves his father's court, causing the court to lament as if he were dead (v. 2744).

armor that cause his wounds to reopen (v. 4584-4587). For the first time in the chosen texts of this study, a reference to clothing becomes a feature of fainting scenes, as the narrator highlights the role of Erec's heavy armor that leads to his loss of consciousness. Erec returns from his battle covered in blood, falls on the neck of his horse, tries to lift himself up, and faints off his horse as if dead, "Et chiet pasmez con s'il fust morz" (v. 4601). As he lacked *mesure* in love and neglected other aspects of his life, Erec lacks balance in knighthood and pushes his devotion to the extreme.

Erec does not regain consciousness for almost two hundred and fifty verses. As his collapse leads other characters to assume that he is dead, extreme distress, attempts to marry Enide, and reconciliations ensue. This section attracts critical attention for many reasons, including the scenes of distress, the transformation of both characters and their love, and the similarities with other texts. For the purpose of this study, this analysis will focus on elements that explain and enlarge the paradigm of syncope in *Erec et Enide*. Immediately following her husband's faint, Enide's mourning parallels the reactions of characters in hagiography, the *chansons de geste*, *romans d'anitquité*, and *lais*, as she displays several external signs of distress typical of a *planctus* scene.[135] She wails, wrings her hands, tears her dress, pulls out her hair, scratches her face (v. 4607-4611), and faints on the body of her husband, "A cest mot sor le cors se pasme" (v. 4615). As common in the *planctus* scene, her unconscious body represents her desire to join her lover in death, but she awakens to blame herself for his death since she could not remain silent (v. 4619), and another faint interrupts her mourning, "Lors rechiet a terre pasmee" (v. 4646). After regaining consciousness, she accuses death of not wanting to help her

[135] In "Le Deuil, mode d'emploi, dans deux romans de Chrétien de Troyes," Virginie Greene analyzes the external signs of distress in this scene of *Erec et Enide* (261). Her article focuses on mourning in *Erec* and *Chevalier au Lion*, but also supports the similarities that we have analyzed in the mourning scenes of the *chansons de geste* and the *romans d'antiquité* in chapter two.

(v. 4652-4653) because her desire to die only results in a faint (Greene 267). While previous instances show that characters faint dead as a sign of complete devotion, such as Aude in the *Chanson de Roland*, Greene suggests that Enide abandons the model of Aude. She says that this scene highlights the unrealism of the model since Enide does not die (267-268). While fainting is tragic and heroic in the *chansons de geste* in order to show absolute devotion, Enide cannot manipulate her fainting to achieve her goal. When her guilt becomes too great, she then tries to imitate Thisbé in *Pyrame et Thisbé* and Didon in *Enéas*, as she follows the actions of the lovesick women who kill themselves with their lover's sword (Greene 268).[136]

Contrary to the tragic end of these two lovers, Chrétien states that God saves Enide by his grace as Oringle of Limors hears her cries and stops her from committing suicide (v. 4666-4677). The count, with obvious alternative motives, insists that mourning cannot bring back the dead, and that Enide still has hope for the future if she marries him (v. 4791). In an extended scene of alternating refusal and despair, Enide shows her extreme fidelity to her husband by rejecting Oringle and continually fainting, "Qui de son duel faire ne fine. / Sovent se pasme et chiet sovine" (v. 4729-4730). Burgess explains "the count's offer of social status and material comfort merits serious consideration ... This is a crucial test of Enide's loyalty, integrity and unselfishness. She passes with distinction, winning an outstanding personal victory" (72).

The frustrated count forcefully marries Enide and hits her when she proclaims that she will never belong to him (v. 4834-4835). Oringle's barons sympathize with Enide saying she has a right to despair for her dead husband (v. 4829-4830), but Oringle's reaction is selfishly motivated. Unlike previous examples in which fainting leads to a lesson, Oringle does not

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[136] Greene also notes that both Didon and Enide call themselves *fole*, and that Didon, Thisbé, and Enide all focus on their guilt. Critics have different opinions regarding Enide's guilt. Greene states that unlike Thisbé who causes the suicide of her lover or Didon who gives into a passion that destroys her, Enide is not actually guilty because Erec apparently dies from his injuries, not Enide's disobedience of breaking her silence. Burgess explains that Enide is guilty because she joins in the slander of her husband at court (52; Topsfield 33).

interject with true hope like the pope in *Alexis*, tell her to revenge her loved one's death like warriors in *Thèbes*, or say she should be ashamed of her behavior like Soliman in *Antioche*; he thinks of his own desires and demands. Furthermore, if breaking her silence on the journey with Erec shows a lack of respect, Enide's rejection of Oringle now illustrates fidelity, as "her rhetoric, which functioned previously as the undoer of the other, is now directed only toward Erec's recovery, and indicates the desire on her part to submit herself entirely to this love for the other" (Amtower 185). While Enide's love may seem selfish in the beginning as she focuses on Erec's reputation at court, she now ignores the opinions of others and her love is true.

Before Erec's loss of consciousness, the narration seems to be in a continuous cycle of Erec and Enide encountering a group of attacking knights, Enide breaking her silence, and Erec becoming angry. Chrétien then uses the prolonged faint to delay the narration concerning Erec, and simultaneously propel the narration and insert the character of Oringle, who tries to profit from Enide's weakened state. Erec's faint therefore functions as a narrative prosthesis. Enide's repeated fainting and Oringle's continuous pleas again delay the narration, but Erec's awakening recommences the action. In analyzing the motif of awakening and its diverse ways of advancing the story, Donald Maddox states that the "crisis of awakening" causes characters to reassess the situation or reality and respond to the crisis (37).[137] Maddox presents ideas similar to that of narrative prosthesis, except that the narration depends on a character's awakening from sleep instead of a disability. His main example comes from the scene in which the crying Enide awakens Erec to the crisis of his *recreantise* and diminished reputation. Erec reacts and begins his quest, and the awakening becomes a "catalyst to narrative development" (38). At the same time, Maddox states, "the awakening motif is also semanticized as a locus at which significant

[137] Maddox primarily focuses on awakenings from sleep, and he lists many awakenings at the end of his study, including Erec's prolonged faint.

transformations or crystallizations of identity tend to occur. Upon awakening, Erec hears Enide speak candidly for the first time, and her disclosure of his negative public image causes him to initiate a long process whereby that image is redeemed and glorified" (41). In this example, Erec's awakening is both literal, due to Enide's lament, and metaphorical because he realizes he has been wrong (37-38).

Applying this idea to Erec's awakening from his prolonged faint, Erec regains consciousness and confronts Oringle. This crisis propels him to action and Erec and Enide begin to be reconciled. In this scene, Erec awakens dramatically when he hears Enide proclaim that she will never belong to Count Oringle.[138] He immediately responds to the crisis as he jumps up, takes his sword, and kills the count by hitting him on the head. He thus rescues his wife, due to love for her and out of anger toward the count.

Revint Erec de paumoisons,
Ausi con li hons qui s'esveille.
S'il s'esbahi, ne fu merveille,
Des genz qu'il vit environ lui;
Mais grant duel ot et grant ennui,
Quant la voiz sa fame entendi.
Dou dois a terre descendi,
Et trait l'espee isnelement;
Ire li done hardement,
Et l'amor qu'a sa fame avoit (v. 4848-57).

[138] Maddox states that the "later awakenings of Erec by Enide [including this scene of Erec's regaining consciousness] recall the initial counterpart [Enide waking him from sleep to tell him he is *recréant*], thus creating a pattern of repetition and variation…" (32).

As the narrator uses a description of sleep to explain Erec's awakening, it is clear that fainting, sleep, and death have similar states since Erec was unconscious, the other characters thought he was dead, and he awakens like a confused man from sleep.

Greene calls attention to the parody of this scene because Enide's *planctus* is for a character that is not dead. She says,

> Chrétien prouve son aptitude à inventer un personnage d'amoureuse aussi héroïque et passionnée que ses devancières, Aude, Yseut, Didon, et Thisbé, mais il introduit une divergence incongrue par rapport à ses modèles en supprimant l'un des deux éléments de base de la mort d'amour: la mort. Erec n'est pas mort, Enide ne meurt pas, ce qui donne à toute la scène un tour ironique (269).

Greene clarifies that the scenes of mourning and the *planctus* are sincere, but that the irony amuses the reader and shows the theatricality of the scene (269). The theme of appearance versus reality, especially in the context of unconsciousness or death, becomes central in Chrétien's other romances, as we will see.

In this scene of confusion, Chrétien uses Erec's prolonged faint and reawakening as a turning point in the story to reconcile his relationship with Enide and prove his fidelity. Erec forgives his wife, desires to love her as before, and reassures her of this love (v. 4914-4929). Chrétien continues to join together different episodes by mentioning Erec's weakened state to emphasize the process of reconciliation, and even repeats the circumstances of his prolonged loss of consciousness as Erec and Enide reencounter Guivret.[139] However, Erec's physical healing

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[139] The character of Guivret frames Erec's unconsciousness. When he hears that Oringle killed a knight and took his lady, he goes to rescue Enide. However, he meets the weakened Erec on his way and attacks without recognizing him, causing him to fall from his horse. Enide reproaches Guivret for attacking a wounded knight, and Guivret remarks that she must truly be in love (v. 5042). This brief scene emphasizes Enide's devotion to her husband and allows the narrator to repeat the spectacle of Erec's prolonged faint and reawakening as Erec explains the events to Guivret.

and their healing as a couple is clear.[140] Like Lavine in the *Roman d'Enéas*, whose suffering from lovesickness ends when Enéas reassures her of his love, Enide's distress and guilt end when Erec reconfesses his love. The narrator states that the couple forgives, affirms their love, and forgets their suffering, "Or ont faite lor penitence … / Or ont lor amor refermee / Et lor grant dolor oblïee" (v. 5245, 5249-50). Their mutual love becomes even more evident when Guivret gives Enide a horse's saddle with the story of Enéas engraved on the side. The allusions to the *Roman d'Enéas* represent Erec and Enide's love struggle from their unbalanced love to their true love, seen in Didon's *fol'amor* and Lavine's *leal amor*.[141] The most interesting similarity is the progression from immature love to perfected love. Raymond Cormier illustrates that in the beginning of their relationship, Erec and Enide's love corresponds to that of Enéas and Didon because it is more selfish and carnal, but that after a series of adventures, Erec and Enide have a love that is more wise and mature, resembling that of Enéas and Lavine ("Remarques" 90-91). Just as syncope emphasizes the symptoms of lovesickness and allows the reader to see the differences in Didon's despairing selfish love and Lavine's true loyal love, syncope is also a critical element in the transformation of love in Erec and Enide, as the literal and metaphorical awakenings after Erec's death-like faint facilitate the reconciliation. After the final test at the *Joie de la Cort*, Erec neither focuses too much on his love while neglecting his duties, nor

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[140] Guivret's sisters specialize in healing wounds (v. 5104), and they remove Erec's old, damaged skin, apply ointment, wash the wounds, apply more ointment, give him a diet without garlic or pepper, and after fifteen days, bathe him to give him back his color (v. 5190-5198, 5213-5214). Erec eats like a sick person and does not drink very much (v. 5158-5159), and Guivret does not give Erec pure wine to drink, but dilutes it with water. The narrator even states that pure wine is too strong and bad for the sick (v. 5156-5157). While Erec is physically healed of his wounds and restored to health, Enide is emotionally healed and joyful, and regains her color after becoming pale to due distress, "Or li revient sa granz beautez, / Car mout estoit et pale et tainete, / Si l'avoit ses granz duelz estainte" (v. 5234-5236).

[141] For further discussion of the allusions to the *Roman d'Enéas* see Amtower, "Courtly code and conjointure: the rhetoric of identity in *Erec et Enide;*" Burgess, *Chrétien de Troyes Erec et Enide: Critical Guides to French Texts*; Cormier, "Remarques sur le *Roman d'Enéas* et l'*Erec et Enide* de Chrétien de Troyes."

focuses exclusively on his knightly reputation while neglecting his love. The text closes with a restoration of love, knighthood, and service to others.[142]

Chrétien's art of *conjointure* is essential as the intertwining themes and motifs unite the story of *Erec et Enide* and dramatically illustrate the lovers' renewed relationship. Additionally, in this romance and continuing to the *Conte du Graal*, Chrétien often redirects the narration and cuts short certain descriptions by stating that he will not provide more details. As explored in the introduction of this study, the word syncope comes from a Greek root meaning "to cut off," and definitions extend to a grammatical suppression of sounds or letters within a word. By cutting the narration short, Chrétien imposes a sort of literary syncope. A notable example occurs when Erec arrives in Brandigan and begins his adventure at the *Joie de la Cort*. Erec enters king Evrain's elaborate court, but Chrétien says he will not waste describing everything in the room because he wants to advance more quickly.

> Dont la chambre estoit embelie?
>
> Le tens gasteroie en folie;
>
> Mais je ne le vuil pas gaster,
>
> Ainçois me vuil un po haster,
>
> Car qui tost vait la droite voie
>
> Passe celui qui se desvoie;
>
> Por ce ne m'i vuil arester (v. 5565-5571).

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[142] The final test at the *Joie de la Cort* emphasizes the juxtaposition between the couple's unbalanced love in the beginning and their relationship after Erec's loss of consciousness. When Erec is victorious, his knightly prowess is unquestionable and Enide exclaims that she could not imagine a greater love (v. 6298-6299). The couple seems to have found a balance between Erec's duty and reputation as a knight and their love. On the other hand, the couple within the garden reflects Erec and Enide's love in the beginning that remains isolated and does not allow access to society, but is more a prison of love (Cormier, "Remarques" 91). Finally, the *Joie de la Cort* emphasizes Erec and Enide's complete transformation because it is a test that allows them to "look beyond themselves and initiate interaction with the external world" (Amtower 186). For more of a discussion of the *Joie de la Cort*, see Amtower, Burgess, Cormier, and Press.

Chrétien purposefully accelerates the narration, thus speeding the time of narration[143], in order to describe what he deems important. The paradigm of syncope thus expands to include a literary technique as an author can cut superfluous details and redirect the reader's attention. [144]

Another narrative technique common in Chrétien's works, especially *Erec et Enide*, is the *brisure du couplet*, as described by Jean Frappier and briefly outlined in this section. Common in the twelfth century, Chrétien's romances are in eight-syllable couplets with *rimes plates* (Baumgartner, *Yvain* 12). Normally, the rime of the phrase ends on the second verse in the couplet, but Chrétien breaks the couplet and often ends the phrase in the first verse (Frappier 2). While Chrétien was not the first to use this technique, Frappier claims that no one did it as frequently or as well (3). A break in a couplet would produce shock for listeners who were accustomed to hearing the reader stop on the second rime, and as a result, the listeners would become more attentive and the poetic technique would be effective (4). Frappier suggests several reasons that Chrétien uses the broken couplet in *Erec et Enide*, most notably to create a pause in the story and introduce a new scene or character (5). This technique is common, for example, in dialogues to signal a change in speaker, but Chrétien does not use the broken couplet for every change (8). In the story itself, Chrétien often breaks the couplet in order to signal a change in narration or a progression in the events (14-15). Frappier gives the example of Erec's battle with five knights because a broken couplet signals a change from one knight to the next. He states, "chaque fois qu'un nouvel adversaire entre en scène, *la brisure ponctue ce tournant de l'action*" (16). He adds that, "a plus forte raison la brisure intervient quand se produit dans le cours de l'action un changement soudain ou d'une particulière importance" (17). Frappier's analysis is

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[143] Using the terms of Paul Ricoeur and Gerard Genette to mean the *temps du raconter* or *Erzählzeit*.

[144] Other examples of literary syncope: *Erec et Enide* (v. 1084, 6316-18); *Cligès* (v. 1204, 2316-2318, 5690-5692); *Chevalier au Lion* (v. 2165, 2672, 5834-5835); *Chevalier de la Charrette* (v. 6414-6415); *Conte du Graal* (v.1328, 3862-3863, 6138-6139).

valuable to this study on syncope because Chrétien often uses the *brisure du couplet* during a fainting episode. Looking at the scene in which Erec attacks three knights and causes the second to faint, the couplet breaks on the verse explaining the loss of consciousness,

> Erec de sa lance le quart
>
> Li fist parmi le pi passer.
>
> Cil ne le fera plus lasser:
>
> *Pasmé jus dou destrier l'enverse.*
>
> A l'autre point a la traverse,
>
> Quant cil le vit vers lui venir" (italics added; v. 2880-2885).

A loss of consciousness produces a pause in the text since the reader's attention redirects to the collapsed character, and the broken couplet further emphasizes this faint and pause by stopping the rime. This *brisure* also signals a change in character as Erec now chases after the third knight.

Frappier also illustrates the importance of the broken couplet in transitions, "c'est l'assemblage d'une rupture et d'une liaison qui fait de la brisure un instrument idéal de transition" (21). Chrétien uses this technique during the critical transition of Erec's loss of consciousness.

> Si con il relever cuida,
>
> La sele et les estriers vuida,
>
> *Et chiet pasmez con sil fust morz.*
>
> Lors commenca li duelx si forz,
>
> Quant Enide cheoir le vit. (italics added; v. 4599-4603).

The rime breaks on the first verse of the couplet as the phrase ends with Erec's death-like faint. Both the unconsciousness and the break on the rime dramatically redirect the reader's attention to the sudden change as the narration shifts to extreme mourning. As a result of this technique, "deux épisodes successifs se trouvent-ils enchainés légèrement par l'identité de la rime tout en restant bien distincts. On a là une forme modeste, si l'on veut, mais fort utile, de cette 'molt bele conjointure' dont Chrétien s'est justement vanté dans le prologue de son roman" (Frappier 21). In *Erec et Enide*, Chrétien uses the broken couplet in seven out of the nine instances of fainting. This added emphasis from the poetic technique punctuates the importance of fainting and redirects the reader or listener to unhorsed knights, Enide's emotional distress, and Erec's prolonged faint.

Cligès

It is notable in *Erec et Enide* that the love relationship between the couple involves marriage, almost from the very beginning. In *The Allegory of Love*, C.S. Lewis explains that Chrétien's works from *Erec et Enide* to *Lancelot* illustrate the "emotional revolution which was taking place in his audience" (25). He shows that the relationship between Erec and Enide depicts the "world where women are merely the mute objects of gift or barter," but that *Lancelot* demonstrates the secret courtly love relationship with the lady in charge (26). This change also coincides with the increasing role of women in twelfth-century literature, continuing with Chrétien de Troyes. In the epic texts, women hold a small role, and even in the *Roman d'Enéas*, the woman's role as a prize after war is visible when Enéas fights to win Lavine and the land. The *romans d'antiquité* have many courtly elements, but Chrétien's romances emphasize marriage and courtly love, the increased prominence of female characters, and the "emotional

revolution," as Lewis calls it, as the psychology of the characters is much more evident. As this study analyzes Chrétien's romances, it is interesting to follow the evolving relationships and to observe syncope's role in these changes.

In his second romance, *Cligès*, Chrétien presents both marriage and courtly love, and syncope is once again central to the relationships of his characters. Written between 1176-1177, *Cligès* contains eight instances of fainting, four trance-like states of syncope, and numerous other references to lovesickness.[145] Chrétien draws from the traditional paradigm of fainting as a sign of distress and a symptom of lovesickness, yet in his romances instances of lovesickness are often misunderstood as distress. The appearance versus reality of the situation results in a parody of typical scenes of mourning. Finally, a state of syncope becomes part of an complex plan for Fénice to escape her husband, and Chrétien elaborates on the use of syncope as a means to a goal.

The story of *Cligès* follows a diachronic structure (Fritz 24), first relating the story of Cligès's parents, Alexandre and Soredamor, followed by the life of Cligès and his love Fénice. The narrator begins by claiming the authenticity of the story, stating he found it in the library in Beauvais (v. 21).[146] Alexandre, the oldest son of the rich emperor of Greece and Constantinople, desires to become a knight at Arthur's court and earn honor. While showing Alexandre's prowess as he helps Arthur defend his kingdom against Engrès, the story emphasizes the lovesickness of Soredamor, Gauvain's sister, and Alexandre. The two eventually marry and have a son, Cligès. When the emperor dies, Alexandre's younger brother, Alis, becomes ruler because

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[145] Fainting due to distress in battle: Greek army (v. 2037, 2039, 2055, 2100-2101); distress after Fénice's illness, death: Alis and others at court (v. 5686), knights (v. 6052), funeral mourners (v. 6073); Lovesickness: Fénice (v. 4048); Trances due to lovesickness: Soredamor (v. 930, 1411), Alexandre (v. 1371); Trances due to distress surrounding Fénice's illness: Alis, Cligès, Fénice (v. 4279-4283).

[146] All citations for *Cligès* come from Charles Méla's edition.

a messenger led the empire to believe that Alexandre was dead. Upon hearing the news, Alexandre returns to Greece, and in a scene resembling the *Roman de Thèbes,* the two brothers decide to share the kingdom with Alexandre as the true ruler and Alis only keeping the name of emperor. The second half of the story follows much the same pattern of the first as the narrator depicts Cligès's knightly heroics at Arthur's court, and then his love story. When Alexandre dies, Alis marries the beautiful Fénice, thus breaking his pact to never marry and give Cligès the crown. However, Cligès and Fénice fall in love and trick the emperor so that they can be together. Reminiscent of *Tristan et Yseut*, Cligès defends the empire for his uncle Alis, but must fight and escape when his secret love is revealed. The two parts of the story allow an analysis of Soredamor's classic lovesickness that eventually ends in marriage, followed by the lovesick Fénice, who takes control of the situation to make her marriage with Cligès possible.

In this story, Chrétien de Troyes shows his familiarity with other texts and genres, and the reader can easily understand the knightly heroics, love longing, and distress of the characters. The opening lines of the text's prologue illustrate Chrétien's knowledge of Ovid (v. 1-3)[147] and prepare the reader for the suffering of the lovers. The psychological focus on the characters of Alexandre and Soredamor is evident due to interior monologues, signs of suffering, and their striving to understand love's passion. Expected symptoms of lovesickness occur, as love begins at first sight and characters are struck by love's arrow. However, the narrator creates humor as he takes the characters' confusion regarding their symptoms to an extreme, as for example in the interior monologues in which they try to explain an emotion with the literal functioning of the heart, eyes, and body. Alexandre does not understand why his heart hurts if the arrow enters

147 "Cil qui fist d'Erec et d'Enide, / Et les comandemenz d'Ovide / Et l'art d'amors en romanz mist…"

through the eye when he first sees Soredamor.[148] The same confusion is apparent in the relationship of Cligès and Fénice, as they "exchange eyes" and promise each other their hearts. The narrator interjects that the effects of love are poetic metaphors and not literal because a body cannot have two hearts, even if men sing about it in verse (v. 2794-99).[149] Chrétien uses familiar descriptions and metaphors of lovesickness, but also illustrates how characters try to hide, manipulate, or resolve love and its emotions.

Love is the central theme surrounding the characters of Alexandre and Soredamor, and while knightly heroics are evident, the narrator explains that his main intent is to focus on the effects of love, instead of King Arthur (v. 570-574).[150] Moreover, the motif of appearance versus reality is immediately visible in Alexandre and Soredamor's relationship when they try to hide their true feelings from each other and everyone else. The narrator seems to mock secrecy in love, as the couple suffers and other characters eventually discover the truth. The deception of Alexandre and Soredamor also foreshadows the great hoax of Fénice and Cligès when they feign an unconscious state in order to escape and be together.

In the first instance of misunderstanding the effects of love, Guinevere thinks that both Soredamor and Alexandre are seasick as they change color, turn pale, sigh, and shake (v. 543-

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[148] Alexandre concludes that the eye is the mirror of the heart, and the heart is like a candle that burns in a lantern. Since the eyes are the glass of the lantern, and the heart sees and appreciates the different colors and objects that pass through, it is possible for the eyes to deceive the heart (v. 686-745). Polak suggests that this monologue may "reflect the interest in Aristotelian optics current at the time" (43).

[149] The couple exchanges eyes, "Par boenne amor, no par losange, / Ses eux li baille et prent les suens" (v. 2762-2763), and hearts, "Ses eulz et son cuer i a mis, / Et cil li ra le suen promis" (v. 2771-72).
For further study, see Polak and O'Sullivan. In her analysis of *Cligès*, Lucie Polak says that Chrétien mocks the "courtly motif of the exchange or migration of hearts" even though he uses it himself in his poem, "D'amors qui m'a tolu a moi" (45-47). O'Sullivan's article presents and analyzes this poem.

[150] Dou roi Artu parler ne quier
A ceste foiz plus longuement,
Einçois m'orroiz dire coment
Amors les .II. amanz travaille,
Vers cui il a prise bataille (v. 570-74).

552), and the narrator says that Guinevere would have discovered the truth if the sea had not tricked her, "Espoir bien s'en aperceüst / Se la mers ne la deceüst" (v. 547-548). This scene imitates the play on words of the sea, love, and sickness from Thomas's *Tristan et Yseut*, but in *Tristan*, "it served as a covert avowal of love, it has the contrary effect here. The author (and the audience), being in the know, derive amusement from Guenevere's confusion" (Polak 38). The lovesickness of the couple only increases and they try to hide their true feelings and trick those around them (v. 609-613), a strategy the reader knows cannot work from the examples of lovesickness in the *romans d'antiquité,* especially the *Roman d'Enéas*.[151]

One of the most important elements of lovesickness in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes is the love trance. While the love trances have been previously noted in this study, Chrétien's adapts this motif beginning with *Cligès* and shows Alexandre fixating on a shirt. The love trance illustrates the depth of the love between Soredamor and Alexandre, but similarly to the couple's seasickness, the trance mocks the secrecy of their love. In this scene, Alexandre returns from battle and becomes pensive in the presence of Soredamor, "Et semble que molt fust pensis" (v. 1371), while Soredamor also becomes lost in thought when she notices he is wearing a shirt that she had sewn with her hair, "En cesti pensé tant sejorne" (v. 1411).[152] Guinevere then notices the lovers' stares and paleness, and starts to laugh when she remembers Soredamor

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[151] The lovers' torments continue for several verses as they think they are mad (v. 511, 624) and that a remedy does not exist (v. 648). As discussed in chapter two of this study, the similarities and connections between the descriptions of lovesickness in the *Roman d'Enéas* and *Cligès* become even greater because both texts mention the symptom of yawning (*Cligès* v. 882, *Enéas* v. 8139), while this symptom is absent in Ovid (Polak 17).

[152] The pensive Alexandre returns from battle wearing a shirt that Guinevere had given him when he became a knight. Unbeknownst to Alexandre, Soredamor sewed this shirt using a few strands of her own hair (v. 1157). Adding to the irony, Soredamor does not know Alexandre has the shirt, and Guinevere does not yet know the two are in love (v. 1145, 1176).

sewed the shirt with her hair (v. 1561). Alexandre is already "esbahie" (v. 1577)[153] to be in the presence of Soredamor, but suspecting the couple to be in love[154] and making fun of their behavior, Guinevere increases the torment of lovesickness by asking Soredamor to reveal that she made the shirt. Alexandre must then restrain himself from embracing the shirt in public, and waits until he is alone to kiss it more than 100,000 times (v. 1607-1622). The metonymic function is evident, as Alexandre acts as if he is with Soredamor. The narrator mocks Alexandre's behavior by saying that love makes a wise man mad when he becomes happy about a hair, "Bien fet Amors de sage fol / Quant cil fet joie d'un chevol" (v. 1633-34). The love trances described with "pensis," "pensé," and "esbahie" reveal Alexandre and Soredamor's true feelings, and function as a type of syncope as the pensive states distance them from reality.

The couple's love becomes even more suspicious when Chrétien links fainting from distress and lovesickness, and the motif of appearance versus reality continues. In the battle against Engrès, Alexandre and his men put on the armor of the deceased enemy soldiers as part of their battle strategy, but great despair ensues when the other Greek soldiers, unaware of the plan, find the armor of Alexandre and his men among the dead bodies outside of the castle. Similar to distress in epic battles,[155] the characters mourn and faint several times, but the narrator continually interjects that the characters' distress is futile, "Si fesoient .I. duel si fort / Por lor

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153 Sutherland shows that "esbahi" became common to describe love meditation "in contexts where the affective value was uppermost" (186). In this situation it shows that Alexandre's emotions are already externally evident, but they increase when he discovers that his love made the shirt.

154 "Que ce sont accident d'amors" (v. 1588).

155 The epic battle scenes between Arthur's army and Engrès share many similarities with the *chansons de geste* because of the descriptions of battle strategies, forceful hits, breaking armor, injured and dying knights, and especially when Engrès is said to be a worse traitor than Ganelon (v. 1072). Since Alexandre appears as an epic hero (Polak 27), a reader familiar with the *Chanson de Roland*, for example, can anticipate epic fainting that illustrates the strength and prowess of a particular knight as well as the true interior emotions of characters that despair when the knight dies.

seignor li Greu a tort" (v. 2033-34).[156] Similar to the parodied death scene in *Erec et Enide*, the characters in this episode mourn those who are not really dead. This spectacle after the death of a comrade is tragic in the *chansons de geste* and illustrates emphatically a knight's importance to the particular army. The knights think their men are dead, and Chrétien uses a *brisure du couplet* in two instances of fainting to pause on the men's grief. [157] However, the scene does not create sympathy or slow the narration with *planctus* scenes because the narrator immediately reminds the reader that the distress is misplaced.

Aside from depicting despair, syncope redirects attention to the fainting, mourning characters as well as to the deceased. However, Chrétien adapts the motif and uses these instances to focus attention away from Soredamor, who loses her senses, "pert le memoire." She then becomes pale when she thinks Alexandre is dead (v. 2079-2080). The narrator says that Soredamor causes herself further pain because she tries to hide her distress, "Et ce la grieve molt et blece / Qu'ele n'ose de sa destrece / Demostrer semblant en apert" (v. 2081-2083). Unlike Ismène in the *Roman de Thèbes* who faints when she thinks Atys is dead, and is not ashamed of her behavior, Soredamor is concerned with courtly discretion and revealing true emotions. Underlining the absurdity of her secrecy, the narrator says that Soredamor's emotions are still visible, but everyone is too preoccupied with their own distress to notice, "Mais tant avoit chascuns a faire / A la soë doulor retraire / Que il ne li chaloit d'autrui (v. 2089-2091). As men

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156 The Greeks find the shield of Alexandre, faint, and wish that they were dead, "Por son escu qu'il reconoissent, / De duel fere trestuit s'angoissent, / Si se pasment sor son escu / Et dient que trop ont vescu" (v. 2035-38). The narrator also mentions the mourning of specific knights, such as Cornin and Nerius who faint (v. 2039), Coron and Acorionde who cry uncontrollably (v. 2041-2043) and Permenidos who pulls out his hair (v. 2046). The five men then faint on the shields of Alexandre's men, "Si se pasment sus et dementent" (v. 2055), and then take the bodies back to their tents. The irony of the situation is accentuated when the narrator states that only one of the Greeks, Neriolis, actually died, and deserves the mourning of the army. Yet, the Greek army dramtically mourns for all the men, not realizing that most are alive.

157 "…por quoi il croient / Que li cors lor compeignons soient, / *Si se pasment sus et dementent*. / Mais trestuit li escu lor mentent" (italics added v. 2053-2056); "La pleure li fiz sor le pere / Et ça li peres sor le fil. / Sor son frère se pasme cil / *Et cil autres sor son neveu*." (italics added v. 2098-2101).

continue to faint (v. 2100-2101), the text emphasizes the narrator's point because the characters are unconscious and unaware.

The men soon rejoice when they realize that Alexandre and his army are still alive, and Arthur offers Alexandre a reward for his heroic feats in battle. Alexandre of course desires Soredamor's hand in marriage, but is too timid because he does not know Soredamor's true feelings. Guinevere intervenes by telling Alexandre and Soredamor that their love is tormenting them and they should have an honorable relationship in marriage (v. 2241-2270). The couple's symptoms of lovesickness, from seasickness to the trance on the shirt to distress in battle, make their love evident to Guinevere, and love cures them.[158] Chrétien highlights love in marriage, as Guinevere insists that the couple marry instead of having a relationship of violence and passion (v. 2262-2267). Alexandre and Soredamor get married, and narrative time accelerates. Chrétien uses literary syncope, as he cuts his words and does not describe the wedding because people are not interested and because he has better things to say, "Por ce qu'as plusors depleüst / N'i vueil parole user ne perdre, / Qu'a melz dire me vueil aerdre" (v. 2316-2318). As he quickly transitions to the birth of Cligès,[159] and soon focuses on Cligès's love for Fénice, he redirects the reader's attention to what he deems important, the next love relationship. Norris Lacy suggests that Chrétien's "primary objective is to excite and maintain our interest and [he] does all he can to assure that we see what is important, that we understand its function, and that we read the

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158 Lucie Polak explains that, unlike the characters, the reader is not confused by the treatment for lovesickness because "the courtly listener, who knew Ovid and *Eneas*, has the pleasure of recognizing Love, or rather, the beloved, as the enigmatic doctor, as well as the cause of the illness, without being explicitly told" (42).

159 The circumstances surrounding Alexandre and Soredamor's deaths further show their devotion and love. Following the model of Aude, Soredamor dies immediately after Alexandre because she cannot live without him (v. 2580-2581). Contrary to the dramatic scene after everyone thinks Alexandre is dead, the narrator succinctly states that Alis and Cligès mourn, but then put an end to their distress because it is unhealthy to hold on to grief that cannot change the circumstances (v. 2582-2588). Adding to the various perceptions of distress, this statement reminds readers of the Count Oringle who pleads with Enide to give up her grief because it cannot bring back the dead (v. 4791), or Erec who does not show his grief after the death of his father because it is not appropriate for the king to do so (v. 6516-6519).

story as he wants us to" (*Craft* 37). Chrétien does not critique courtly love explicitly, and "his beliefs, his own ideas on love and morality are nowhere stated" (Haidu 111), yet he highlights marriage in the relationship of Alexandre and Soredamor, especially with Guinevere's comment that marriage is the proper choice. As we will see in the *Chevalier de la Charrette*, Guinevere's advice is a little ironic in relation to her behavior with Lancelot. The literary syncope of the wedding details prepares the reader for the relationship of Cligès and Fénice that resembles courtly love.

Chrétien continues to contrast marriage and courtly love, and similar struggles with lovesickness are visible in the relationship of Cligès and Fénice. Moreover, courtly discretion and secrecy become even more prominent since Fénice is married to Cligès's uncle. The most striking difference from the relationship of Alexandre and Soredamor is that Cligès and Fénice take the initiative and seek to control their emotions and cure their lovesickness. Furthermore, the role of medicine and magic is central to the relationship, as Fénice seeks help from her governess, Thessala, who can treat diverse illnesses, and doctors from Salerno arrive at court. When Fénice falls in love at first sight, the expected symptoms occur, and Thessala, noticing her paleness, convinces Fénice to reveal her feelings. The narrator describes Thessala's abilities as magic (v. 2958), and Thessala says that she can diagnose by checking the urine and pulse (v. 2980-2981). Similar to Lavine in *Enéas*, Fénice describes an illness that is sweet, yet painful (v. 3055-3056), and Thessala identifies the sickness as love. Unlike Soredamor who tries to ignore her love and hide her emotions, Fénice reveals, albeit in secret to her governess, that she is in love with the nephew of the man she must marry. Her marriage with Alis is an obstacle to her love for Cligès, and Fénice claims that she does not want a shameful love like that of Tristan and

Yseut (v. 3104-3105). Thessala's solution is to give Alis a magic potion that will make him think he and Fénice consummate their love, but Fénice will remain pure.[160]

The potion is effective, yet Cligès and Fénice's relationship parallels that of Alexandre and Soredamor because the two are afraid to reveal their love to each other even though their emotions are visible externally. However, Cligès and Fénice's love resembles courtly love, as it follows Andreas Capellanus's first rule that marriage is not an excuse to hinder love (182).[161] After the Saxons kidnap Fénice and Cligès rescues her,[162] the narrator states that it is time for the two to declare their love, but the fear of rejection stops them (v. 3775-78), even if their eyes betray their thoughts, "Mais neporquant des euz encuse / Li uns a l'autre son penser (v. 3782-3783). He describes the world as upside down since perfect lovers will not profess their love, and a valiant warrior like Cligès is afraid of his lady. Yet Andreas Capellanus says that every lover must become pale in the presence of their love and start to tremble (rule 15, 16),[163] and the narrator states that a lover who does not become pale and tremble in the presence of his lady, does not truly love, "Car s'il n'en palist et tressaut, / Cui sens et memoire n'en faut, / En larrecin porchace et quiert / Ce que par droit ne li afiert" (v. 3823-3826). Furthermore, Capellanus says the lover is always fearful (rule 20),[164] and the narrator argues that love without fear is like a fire

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160 The use of potions in love is quite common in twelfth-century literature. The most prominent example being Thomas's *Tristan et Yseut*, in which the potion causes them to fall in love. In chapter two, we also examined the role of the potion to help the young man carry his love up the mountain in the *Dous Amanz* by Marie de France.

161 "I. le mariage n'est pas une excuse valable pour ne pas aimer" (Capellanus 182).

162 Cligès's heroic feats in battle display his courage as the narrator compares him to a leopard, tiger, and lion (v. 3652, 3704), but his strength is only possible because of love and prowess that make him fight well (v. 3754-3755). Unlike the *chansons de geste*, the battle scenes do not show the greatness of the army and country for which Cligès is fighting, but "exalt the individual hero's prowess and in the case of Cligès, to do so in relation to the theme of love" (Polak 22).

163 "XV. Tout amant doit pâlir en présence de son amante / XVI. Quand un amant aperçoit brusquement celle qu'il aime, son cœur doit commencer à tressaillir" (Capellanus 182).

164 "XX. L'amoureux est toujours craintif" (183).

without heat or a day without sun, because a servant must be fearful of his master (v. 3834-3852). Therefore, Cligès is right to fear revealing his love to Fénice "Donc ne fause ne mesprent mie / Cligés se il doute s'amie" (v. 3853-3854).

Although understandable given the circumstances, the narrator mocks the "'courtly' preoccupation with discretion" (Polak 85). Similar to the scene in which no one notices Soredamor's lovesickness because they are too preoccupied with their own mourning, Fénice also greatly distresses when she thinks Cligès is injured in a duel against the Duke of Saxe. Before the duel begins, Fénice claims that she will die if her lover does (v. 4003), and the reader can expect distress similar to that of Aude, Thisbé, Didon, Lavine, Enide, and Soredamor. As Cligès is hit and falls to one knee, Alis is shocked, but Fénice cries out for pity and faints, crossing her arms and scratching her face, "Qu'aranment li faille la voiz, / Et si cheï pasmee en croiz / Si qu'el vis est .I. poi bleciee" (v. 4047-49). As two men hold her upright until she regains consciousness, the real reason for her fainting is not clear because everyone thinks she is empathetic and would react similarly for any knight in a similar situation.[165] Comparing this scene to Soredamor's, Polak suggests that neither discretion nor indiscretion seem to matter because the other characters are either too preoccupied with grief or do not correctly interrupt the fainting. "Soredamor's discretion turns out to be quite unnecessary" and "Fénice's indiscretion does her no harm (85).

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[165] Another example of Fénice's obvious signs of love not being discovered by other characters occurs when Cligès leaves for Arthur's court in order to earn honor. Cligès leaves pensive and Fénice is in a trance-like pensive state, in addition to becoming pale and crying. Once again, however, her feelings remain hidden because Alis and others at court are also pensive and upset to see Cligès leave, and do not notice that the couple's trance-like state are due to lovesickness (v. 4279-4281).

Unlike Alexandre and Soredamor, who reveal their love after Guinevere's plea, Fénice and Cligès finally avow their love when they notice each other's symptoms.[166] Fénice also reveals that Cligès has her body and heart since she is still chaste due to the potion (v. 5176-5199). Yet she fears a shameful reputation as an adulteress since no one will believe that she has preserved her virginity. As Fénice plans to feign death in order to escape her marriage,[167] the motif of appearance versus reality is central to the text, as well as elements of twelfth-century medicine. Most importantly, the plan revolves around an induced state of syncope as an elaborate means to a goal and a way to guard her reputation.

The scheme begins as the rumor spreads that Fénice is sick and dying and Cligès feigns great distress. Knowing that they would discover her lie, Fénice refuses the aid of any doctors, and then refuses to eat or drink so that she becomes deathly pale, "pale et perse" (v. 5643). As the elaborate and detailed scene develops, Chrétien inserts many realistic details of illness, fainting, death, and burial, with the most interesting arising from the second potion that Thessala gives to Fénice.[168] This potion is to make Fénice's body cold, pale, stiff, without breath, and

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166 The poetic metaphor of the exchange of hearts returns, and Cligès's changing color and eyes are proof of his love (v. 4384-93). The changing of colors becomes a key motif in *Cligès*, as it extends to Cligès who changes the color of his armor in battle, wearing black, green, red, and white. The narrator states that Cligès changes his feathers (v. 4846). Following the symbolism of Fénice's name linking her to the colorful bird the phoenix, Chrétien also describes Cligès as a bird. The importance of the phoenix's symbolism becomes especially important after the two lovers finally confess their love, Fénice dies, and they have a new life. Additionally, everyone is tricked because they think Cligès continues to go to the tower to see a bird that changes colors (v. 6242-43).

167 Additional elements of courtly love are visible, as the lovers must reveal their love to two others since Fénice requires the aid of Thessala and Cligès the aid of his serf, Jean. Capellanus says that each lover may have one confident, "Car un amant a le droit de trouver pour son amour un confident qui lui convienne, auprès de qui il puisse trouver un secret appui dans les affaires de cœur, et qui lui offre sa sympathie dans les moments difficiles. Il est aussi permis à sa bien-aimée d'avoir une confidente semblable" (163-164).

168 The first is evident when Fénice instructs Cligès to make her a tomb, but to make sure it is built in such a way that she does not suffocate before he comes to awaken her (v. 5275). Alexandre-Bidon often uses examples from *Cligès*, and explains that Fénice is able to survive due to the funeral shroud, a common funeral practice that still allowed breathing and avoided errors in misdiagnosing death (150-51). The narrator mentions Fénice's funeral shroud twice. Another small detail is the bed of feathers and flowers placed in the tomb. The narrator states that Jean uses the feathers to guard against the coldness and hardness of the stone, and the flowers release a nice odor, yet the

without the ability to speak (v. 5389-5395). Since the common practice for confirming death was to look for symptoms resembling syncope (Alexandre-Bidon 148), the potion only needs to make Fénice seem unconscious in order to deceive. Alexandre-Bidon adds that checking the urine was also a common practice of observation and examination,[169] and Thessala completes the ruse by taking urine from a dying lady and giving it to the doctors as proof that Fénice is near death (v. 5654-5658). In *Causae et curae*, Hildegard of Bingen speaks extensively about how urine can prove a person's state of health because the humors affect the urine's appearance, as well as different illnesses that affect the density (247-253). Thessala thus convinces the doctors that Fénice will die when they see that her urine is "pesme et male" (v. 5670).

The deception works since the shock of the news causes Alis and many others around him to almost faint from distress, "Quant la parole a entendue / L'emperere, a poine se tient / Que pasmez a terre ne vient / Et maint des autres qui l'oïrent" (v. 5684-87). The narrator says that the mourning is extreme, but using a sort of literary syncope, he cuts the description short and redirects the reader's attention to Thessala, "La parole de[l] duel vos lais, / S'orroiz que Thessala porchace / Qui la poison destrempe et brace" (v. 5690-5692). Fénice takes the potion and immediately enters an unconscious state with altered vision, paleness similar to losing blood, rigidity, and is mute, "Li est troublee la veüe, / Si a le vis si pale et blanc / Come s'ele eüst perdu le sanc, / Ne pié ne main ne remeüst" (v. 5700-5703). Her state resembles a loss of consciousness, except that she is able to hear the mourning and distress of those around her.

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true intent is to disguise the litter he places in the tomb so no one will notice (v. 6032-39). The entire plan hinges on appearance versus reality, and deception even in the minutest detail.

[169] In chapter one and two, we discussed visually observing the body, and testing the rigidity, temperature, breathing, and pulse (Alexandre-Bidon 164-167). Alexandre-Bidon outlines all of these tests in his study (159-174). Guy de Chauliac's treatise in the fourteenth century examined these steps, but Alexandre-Bidon says he finds evidence that the observation checklist already existed, for example, as found in the *Roman de Thèbes* (159).

Amidst the mourning and unnecessary distress, three doctors arrive from Salerno. These characters represent medical authority from the renowned city, as well as the gravity of Fénice's illness. However, Chrétien also critiques the learned doctors, as they are unable to revive Fénice and result to extreme measures to prove their knowledge. Saying they could have healed her if they had arrived earlier, the doctors immediately become suspicious upon hearing about Fénice's refusal to see a doctor.[170] As one of the doctors places his hand on her chest and side and feels a pulse (v. 5812-15), he tells Alis to stop mourning because she is still alive. The pulse is the one diagnostic check that Thessala's potion does not cover, and these three doctors from Salerno discover the ruse. Since the pulse and paleness could cause a doctor to err, Guy de Chauliac mentions ways of reanimating an unconscious body, such as rose water, shaking, pulling the nose and ears, causing pain, and calling the person's name (Alexandre-Bidon 155-158). After calling Fénice by name and trying to convince her to talk, the doctors from Salerno use more extreme measures as they beat her, cut her back, burn her hands with fire and lead, and try to roast her over the fire, (v. 5854-5937). Alexandre-Bidon notes that the doctors' torture is unrealistic, but nevertheless gives "un indice sur le fait que les praticiens devaient procéder à certains tests de sensibilité à la douleur" (157). He further states that Thessala's statement to Fénice that she would not suffer for a day and a night (v. 5398) suggests that she knew that doctors would try to verify death by inflicting pain (157).

The torture ends when more than a thousand ladies in the palace notice the doctors' brutality, enter like a mob, and throw the doctors out the window (v. 5966-69). The doctors were so sure of their own capabilities that they told Alis he could torture or hang them if they could

[170] The doctors remember the story of Solomon's wife who pretended to be dead because of her hatred of her husband (v. 5796-98). Moreover, in his treatise on syncope from the nineteenth century, Alexandre Domecq gives an example of a spy who successfully feigned a fainted and/or dead state in order to escape, and additionally states that the people of Laon excelled in the art of feigning death (24).

revive Fénice (v. 5823-5824), and their torture of Fénice illustrates their desperation to prove she is alive. They are correct in their diagnosis, yet they are also deceived because they cannot revive her.

Deception again aids Fénice's plan, and fainting is critical as it redirects attention. Modeling the traditional burial scene with plaints and fainting, there is intense mourning as knights and young men pass out and ladies and young girls beat their chests, "chevalier et vaslez se pasment, / Et les dames et les puceles / Batent lor piz et lor mameles" (v. 6052-6054). Jean must carefully seal the tomb since Fénice is still alive, and the narrator notes that Jean is able to do what he wants because everyone else is unconscious and does not notice,

> Mais sor Johan ne s'entremetent
> De la sepulture asseer,
> Neïs nel porent il veer,
> Ainz sunt trestuit pasmé chaü,
> S'a Johan bon leissir eü
> De faire quant que il li sist (v. 6070-6075).

The unconsciousness of the bystanders facilitates the plan, and the narrator's description emphasizes their deception, while also parodying the traditional mourning scene since Fénice is not dead.

Fénice's unconsciousness is so complete that Cligès himself is duped and sincerely laments her death (v. 5974-5983). As he takes her body to their secret tower, he continues mourning and the narrator adds that Cligès did not know about the potion and truly thinks she is dead (v. 6143-6147).[171] Polak emphasizes that the scene is "treated in the spirit and style of

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[171] Et Cligés qui rien ne savoit
De la poison que ele avoit

comedy," especially since Cligès seems to not have known about the potion (63-64). Peter Haidu adds that Chrétien "displays characters floundering in illusion," but that the reader is "privileged to know the reality withheld from the characters" (110). Unlike the scene in Marie de France's *Eliduc* in which Guilliadon's state is unclear, the reader can appreciate the parody of this episode and the irony that both Cligès and Fénice are themselves duped.

During Cligès's lament, the potion loses its strength and Fénice replies that she is not completely dead (v. 6188-6189). The tone changes when she adds that she was only feigning death, but she might actually be dying, "Je [me] cuidai gaber et feindre, / Mes or m'estuet a certes plaindre, / Car la mort n'a soig de mon gap" (v. 6191-6193). Haidu explains,

> It is only in a world of magic fantasy that Fénice's dream of an exclusive and perfect love unencumbered by the demands of reality can exist. Both stages of the plot show that fantasy destroyed by reality. The ruse of the false death leads to the reversal by which the deceiver suffers helplessly the very real tortures of the three doctors who quickly perceive the essence of Fénice's plot (110).

Although the ruse seemingly works and Fénice and Cligès are able to live together in an isolated tower, their plan requires much deception and leads to their own suffering. Furthermore, Haidu shows that the couple also deceives themselves into thinking they can live together in happiness in the tower because "both the ruse of the false death and the existence of courtly love in an isolated tower depend on the conscious deception of others and the use of magic for that purpose" (110).

Dedenz le cors qui la fait mue
Et tient qu'ele ne se remue,
Cuide por voir qu'ele seit morte (v. 6143-6147).

The secret tower and the beautiful garden are just another prison of love, similar to that of the *Joie de la Cort* in *Erec et Enide*.[172] When Alis eventually learns that he has been duped and dies of distress,[173] Cligès and Fénice are free to marry, their love grows daily, and they never doubt each other's love (v. 6669-6679). However, the narrator states that all emperors after Cligès were skeptical of their wives and kept them imprisoned because of Fénice's story (v. 6680-6697). Fénice's main objective is to guard her reputation and reject adultery, but in the end, even though she is now married to her lover, she is remembered for deception.[174] Critics' opinions about Chrétien's intent in the relationship of Cligès and Fénice vary,[175] but in comparison with his other romances as we will see, Chrétien seems to show the immorality of courtly love and its inability to function in society. As is evident in *Erec et Enide* with the *Joie de la Cort* and *Cligès* with the secret tower, the courtly couple can only exist in the prison of love.

Le Chevalier au Lion

Courtly love continues to be the main theme in the *Chevalier au Lion* (*Yvain*). In this romance written between 1171 and 1183, the reader is better able to see the "emotional revolution" to which C.S. Lewis refers (25), as the characters oscillate between marriage and

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[172] For more on concealed love in *Erec et Enide* and *Cligès,* see A.R. Press's article, "The Theme of Concealed Love in Two French Poets of the Twelfth Century."

[173] A knight hunting near the tower climbs the wall and sees the lovers together, and Fénice and Cligès must escape. Jean and Thessala again help the lovers, and the truth quickly becomes evident to Alis. The couple searches for help from Arthur, stating that Alis is guilty because he broke the oath never to marry, but Alis soon dies from distress of not being able to find his wife and nephew.

[174] Haidu explains that "the means by which Fénice attempts to avoid the fate of Iseut leads her to the same fate" (110), and Polak says she is remembered as worse since emperors no longer trust their wives (91).

[175] Polak says that no "clear overall didactic purpose emerges" (94), Adams thinks that deception and adultery were part of court life (192-193), and Haidu says that Fénice is not a model of Christian virtue, but more of a "martyr of courtly love" (97) that cannot exist outside of an isolated tower.

courtly love.[176] The narrator begins by stating that love is in decline and only a matter of fiction at Arthur's court because those who say they love are lying. Therefore he prefers to speak about the former noble knights who were devoted to love.

> S'en est Amours mout abaissie;
> Car chil qui soloient amer
> Se faisoinet courtois clamer
> Et preu et largue et honorable;
> Or est Amours tournee a fable
> Pour chou que chil qui riens n'en sentient
> Dïent qu'il ayment, mes il mentent (v. 20-26).[177]

Yvain is one of the great knights of long ago, who "…en amor se traveillierent" (v. 41), that the narrator deems admirable. While the story depicts Yvain as a courtly knight, the couple's love again ends in marriage and it is again difficult to discern if Chrétien condemns or condones *fin'amor*. David Hult explains that it is tempting to agree that the text is "la glorification de la chevalerie et sa réconciliation avec l'amour du couple; bref, il s'agirait d'un roman à thèse qui viserait la destruction du modèle tristanien de l'amour adultère, appelé communément 'courtois'" (12-13), but that Chrétien's purpose is not that easily defined. Whatever the opinion of the author's intent, it is evident is that Chrétien's romances progress from marriage resembling the feudal model in *Erec et Enide* to complete courtly love in the *Chevalier de la Charrette*. C.S. Lewis defines *fin'amor* as the feudalization of love, and says that romantic passion was added to the feudal system of vassal and lord that already existed (11-12). As we examine *Yvain*, elements

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176 This is also discussed at the beginning of the section on *Cligès*.

177 All citations come from David Hult's edition of the *Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*.

of the story fit easily in between the two systems and lean more toward courtly love in the character of Yvain than in the male protagonists of Chrétien's previous romances.

In *Yvain*, Calogrenant recounts his adventure of receiving a kind welcome at a vassal's castle, meeting a crude man guarding wild bulls, seeing a fountain and a beautiful tree, pouring water from a basin on the emerald steps, being scared of the great storm, and then being defeated by a great knight. Yvain decides to undertake the same adventure to avenge his cousin's shame, but is victorious. Yvain falls in love with the knight's widow, Laudine,[178] and Lunette, her servant, must convince her lady to marry Yvain. Nevertheless, Laudine soon becomes heartbroken and angry when Yvain forgets his oath to return home after a year. Desiring forgiveness and love, Yvain goes through a period of madness before receiving healing and continuing on his quest to regain Laudine's love. With the lion as his companion, he defeats many enemies and obtains a good reputation as the *chevalier au lion*. He must then use this reputation to rectify the problems his broken oaths cause.

As Yvain struggles with love and obeying his lady, syncope illustrates lovers' emotions, and occurs at key moments as Yvain causes the mourning of others, becomes lovesick, tries to remain *courtois*, breaks his oaths, seeks forgiveness, and strives to reconcile with his love.[179] Distress and lovesickness are key triggers for syncope. Laudine's mourning and fainting after the death of her husband, for example, reminds readers of the deep devotion in *Pyrame et Thisbé* or the *romans d'antiquités* in which a loss of love causes fainting. However, the motif of fainting shifts as the spectacle of distress does not focus on the deceased, but creates an opportunity for a new love relationship. The text moves from extreme distress to extreme love. Moreover, the love

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[178] Interestingly, Yvain's lady is only named Laudine in three of the ten manuscripts (Hult 14).

[179] There are five instances of fainting: Laudine (v. 1154, 1160, 1300), Yvain (v. 3493, 3523); one state of syncope in sleep: Arthur (v. 650); four trances: Yvain (v. 1548-1549, 2804-2805, 2888), Laudine (v. 2756).

trances and fainting of Yvain reveal the oaths he has broken. Using the motif of fainting in similar ways to *Erec et Enide* and *Cligès*, *Yvain* contains increased references to courtly love, and introduces a trance caused by sin. This work is therefore an interesting transition from *Erec et Enide* and *Cligès* to the *Charrette* and the *Conte du Graal*.

Yvain's absence from his lady Laudine and his resulting absence from society are a turning point in the story, and the result of many instances of syncope. The motif of absence is apparent from the very beginning with Arthur's absence from court because he is sleeping, "Si demoura tant deles li / Qu'il s'oublia et endormi" (v. 51-52). More than just sleeping, the use of the verb "s'oublier" emphasizes Arthur's incorrect behavior, and his unmindfulness mimics a state of syncope as he is separated from the court. While the verb illustrates Erec's *recreantise*, Sutherland notes that in the courtly sense, "*s'oblidar* applies only to an unmindfulness of social etiquette and of niceties of behavior demanded of the well bred, not a disregard of moral and social standards" (169). Arthur's disregard of social conduct is striking and becomes even more prevalent in the *Conte du Graal*. Moreover, in *Yvain*, Arthur's awakening after almost six hundred verses functions as a catalyst for the narrative.[180] After hearing Calogrenant's story, Arthur also desires adventure, and Yvain quickly leaves since he desires to reach the fountain first and avenge his cousin (v. 721-739).

Once Yvain defeats Esclados, the knight guarding the mysterious fountain, his lovesickness begins when he sees Laudine fainting. Using the traditional scene of mourning after the loss of a loved one, this scene enlarges the paradigm of fainting because the emotional extreme of distress leads to another, love. The narrator explains that suffering makes the woman

[180] Using the term of Donald Maddox (37), as we explored in the analysis of *Erec et Enide*. Maddox also mentions Arthur's awakening from his nap (32, 47).

mad as she pulls out her hair, tears her clothing, and faints frequently.[181] Yvain is in hiding since the inhabitants of the castle seek to kill him, but Laudine's beauty and the spectacle of her distress attract his attention, as he hears her cries and mourning (v. 1173-1174) and wants to watch the funeral procession so that he can see her (v. 1280-1281). Laudine continues to lose consciousness,[182] and Lunette must restrain Yvain from running to her aid (v. 1300-1316). Modifying the motif of fainting surrounding the *planctus*, the dramatic spectacle does not cause Yvain to understand the greatness of the deceased knight, but focuses attention on the fainting Laudine, and syncope functions as a narrative prosthesis to allow the narrator to introduce the resulting love quest. As love at first sight strikes Yvain's heart by passing through his eyes, the narrator describes love as a form of vengeance due to a wound that does not heal.

La dame le mort son seignor;
Venjanche en a prise gregnor
Qu'ele prendre ne l'en peüst,
S'Amours vengie ne l'eüst,
Qui si douchement le requiert,
Que par les iex el cuer le fiert,
Et cist cols a plus grant duree
Que cols de lanche ne d'espee.

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181 Mais de duel faire estoit si fole
C'a poi quele ne s'ochoioit.
A la feÿe s'escrioit
Si haut qu'ele ne pooit plus,
Si recheoit pasmee jus.
Et quant ele estoit relevee,
Aussi comme femme desvee
S'i commenchoit a deschirer,
Et ses chaveus a detirer
Ses chaveus tire et ront ses dras,
Et se repasme a chascun pas, (v. 1150-1160).

182 "Lors se pasmë et se dessire" (v. 1300).

Colz d'espee garist et saine

Mout tost, des que mires y paine;

Et la plaie d'Amours empire

Quant ele est plus pres de son mire.

Chele playe a mesire Yvains

Dont il ne sera jammais sains,

C'Amours s'est toute a lui rendue (v. 1367-1381).

Yvain's lovesickness reflects the Ovidian descriptions of love as the doctor that heals its own wounds.[183] Love becomes Yvain's master, and he decides to obey and love this enemy that wounds him (v. 1454-1457). The love trance to this point is a sign of love, as it is a symptom of lovesickness, but it now becomes a distinguishing marker of a courtly lover. As we will see in the *Charrette* and the *Lancelot en prose*, this function of syncope develops and reaches its height with the character of Lancelot. In the *Chevalier au Lion,* Lunette notices that Yvain is completely lost in thought, and she marvels that someone hiding to save his life could have had a pleasant day.[184] The narrator explains, "De l'amour qui en li s'est mise / Le trouva trespensé et vain" (v. 1548-1549). Despite the circumstances, Yvain finds happiness thinking about his lady and it is love that makes him "trespensé."

Understanding that Yvain is in love and not wanting to talk to him about it,[185] Lunette goes to convince her lady to marry Yvain. She interrupts Laudine's lament and says that

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183 Tracy Adams reads this scene a bit differently and says that Yvain has a "competitive love of violence" (13).

184 "'Messire Yvain, / Quel siecle avés vous hui eü? / -Tel, fait il, qui mout m'a pleü. / - Pleü? Dites vous ore voir?" (v. 1550-1553).

185 "…que bien sai entendre / Ou cheste parole veut tender; / Ne sui si niche ne si fole / Que bien n'entende une parole." (v. 1563-1566).

prolonged mourning is not appropriate for a woman of her rank, "A si haute femme ne monte / Que duel si longuement maintiengne. / De vostre honnor vous resouviengne, / Et de vostre grant gentillesce" (v. 1670-1673). While Adraste in the *Roman de Thèbes* tells Polynice that prolonged mourning is for women and children, Lunette distinguishes between a woman of high rank and other women. Lunette is trying to convince Laudine to marry Yvain, but this statement adds another element to the paradigm of characters' perceptions of fainting and mourning that continues to develop from hagiography to the romances. When Laudine accepts Yvain, her sudden change in behavior highlights the spectacle of the funeral scene. She praises the character of Esclados, but her mourning seems to be a matter of expected behaviors and appearances. Virginie Greene shows that while the spectacle evokes pity for Yvain, Lunette knows that the "deuil des gens du château est plus conventionnel que profond" and that she will be reprimanded if she does not participate in the mourning (271).[186] The theatricality of the mourning that Yvain and Lunette observe is also evident because Laudine's gestures change and her fainting stops once she is in private (Greene 271).

Furthermore, Laudine's quick acceptance of Yvain as her new husband illustrates the feudal political necessity of marriage. As Greene illustrates, "les conventions, peut-être d'origine littéraire, qui proposent aux veuves un deuil passionné, violent et long comme modèle, se heurtent aux conventions sociales qui poussent les veuves nobles à se remarier le plus vite possible" (272). Lunette convinces Laudine that she needs a husband to protect the fountain from Arthur's approaching army (v. 1624) and adds that this has been the custom in the castle for more than sixty years (v. 2103-2106). The couple marries out of necessity and tradition, and even

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[186] *Yvain* v. 1338-1342.

though courtly love cannot exist in marriage according to Capellanus's rules, [187] the relationship of Yvain and Laudine contains many elements of courtly love and prepares the reader for the relationship of Lancelot and Guinevere. [188]

As visible in *Erec et Enide*, Capellanus says that love declines when the lady thinks her lover is cowardly in combat (155), and that separation makes love more intense (24). After Yvain successfully defends his lady's fountain by defeating Keu, Gauvain convinces him to leave because love burns stronger with absence, and encourages him to fight in tournaments because love will decline if a knight neglects his duties (v. 2495-2499). Before his departure, Laudine warns Yvain that her love will turn to hate if he does not return in one year (v. 2564-2568), but Yvain breaks his promise. Accusing Yvain of stealing Laudine's heart, [189] Lunette describes Laudine's love trance, affirming that Laudine truly is in love, "Quar qui aimë en grant pourpens / Est, qu'il ne puet prendre boin somme, / Mais toute nuit conte et asomme / Les jours qui vienent et qui vont" (v. 2756-2759). Laudine has been in a state of social syncope and depression since Yvain left, but when Lunette reveals that her lady no longer cares for him, Yvain's trance-like state of syncope begins.

Lunette leaves Yvain speechless and without his senses due to his despair, "Que sens et parole li faut" (v. 2777), and the shock of his lady's rejection causes him to wander in the forest. His resulting trance and state of madness separate him from reality as he forgets who he is and

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[187] "Nous affirmons comme pleinement établi que l'amour ne peut étendre ses droits entre deux époux" (Capellanus 24).

[188] Elements of courtly love include Yvain submitting to his lady and becoming her prisoner (v. 1942-1944), and the beauty of his lady entering through his eyes and forcing his heart to submit (v. 2017-2024). With Lewis's definition of courtly love as the "feudalization of love" (11), the reader can see Yvain's loyalty to his lady as a vassal as well as his passionate love.

[189] When Yvain leaves, the narrator uses the poetic metaphor of the separation of body and heart as Yvain leaves his heart with Laudine. Similar to his digression in *Cligès* that it is impossible to separate the heart and body, the narrator says that no one has ever seen a body living without a heart, but that it happens and the body waits for the heart to come back (v. 2648-2657). When Yvain breaks his oath to return, Lunette accuses Yvain for taking Laudine's heart.

acts like a savage in the wild. The narrator describes Yvain's separation as a whirlwind in his head that makes him lose his senses, "Lors li monta .i. troubeillons / El chief, si grant quë il forsenne; / Lors se desschire et se despenne / Et fuit par cans et par valees" (v. 2804-2807). Yvain acts like an animal for an unspecified amount of time and all narrative action concerning Laudine, as well as Yvain's knightly exploits, pauses. The narrator recounts Yvain's strange behavior of hunting like an animal and living off the food and water that a hermit supplies. Emmanuèle Baumgartner states that Yvain's "folie" is not "pure péripétie, moyen d'étirer le temps romanesque ou passage obligé de la carrière du héros. Elle est aussi le lieu où faire retour sur le motif fondateur du roman, le *covant*..." (*Yvain* 83). She further says that Yvain's madness illustrates the necessity of rules and behaviors in a society, and also in *fin'amor*.[190] Yvain's period of syncope dramatically illustrates the fault he has committed against his lady and the effect of separating him from his love and society.

Eventually two young ladies find Yvain in the forest and are unable to awaken him. The text emphasizes Yvain's offense, as they wonder what causes him to lose his senses, and relate a trance-like state to a consequence of sin.

> Mais je ne sai par quel pechié
> Est au franc homme meschieü.
> Espoir aucun duel a eü
> Qui le fait ainsi demener,
> C'on puet bien de duel forsener (v. 2924-28).

[190] "La rapidité avec laquelle il perd au sein de la forêt tous les acquis de la culture pour faire retour à l'état d'homme *forsené et sauvage* … souligne aussi bien la précarité de cette culture et la nécessité où se trouve toute société de respecter, pour survivre, le *covant*, le système de comportements ritualisés, codifiés, qui la fonde et dont l'amour, la *fin'amor*, est peut-être la formulation la plus haute" (83).

As we have seen in the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*, fainting highlights suffering, causes Girart to realize his sin, and serves as a transition to his life of penitence. In *Yvain*, characters explicitly associate unconsciousness and sin, and this trope becomes even more prominent in the *Conte du Graal* and the *Lancelot en prose*. A key distinction is that Yvain's offense is worldly, a broken contract with his lady, while the other instances relate to sin of violating God's laws. Not knowing the cause, the young ladies associate Yvain's unknown state with sin and repeat that Yvain will help them if God heals him (v. 2934-2935, 2942-2944), and the lady of Noroison says that God can cure him (v. 2948). This illustrates the prevalent belief that Jesus is the doctor of the body as well as the soul (Imbault-Huart 162), and reoccurs in the *Conte du Graal* with Perceval's extended state of syncope that requires repentance.

The young ladies' desire to revive Yvain is sincere, and they convince the dame de Noroison to help him. They are motivated in part by a political need, as Count Alier is attacking their castle (v. 2939). The narrator describes Yvain as sleeping,[191] but his deep unconscious state requires a special ointment from Morgan to heal his sick head, "Qu'il n'a point de mal autre part / Fors que seulement el chervel" (v. 2972-2973). While the young lady is only supposed to put the ointment on Yvain's temples, she uses all of the ointment and applies it to his entire body because she truly wants him to recover (v. 2993). The text states that she wants to rid his head of "Le rage et le melancolie" (v. 3005). Following the theory of the humors and their roles in illness, medical treatises, such as Platearius's *Circa instans*, often associate the melancholic humor with fainting and folly.[192]

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[191] "C'un jor le trouverent dormant" (v. 2888); "Encor chelui dormant trouva" (v. 2982); "Et puis s'en va la ou chil dort" (v. 2986).

[192] In Platearius's *Le Livre des simples médecines*, borage is useful to treat fainting and those who suffer from the melancholic humor (18). Senna is also useful to treat illnesses caused by the melancholic humor such as epilepsy and fainting (88). In *Causae et curae*, Hildegard of Bingen relates a melancholic temperament in women to "folie" (110).

The descriptions of Yvain awakening weak, confused, and unable to remember what has happened reinforce his state of syncope.[193] The scene is comical as the young lady covers his body in the ointment, hides while waiting for him to awaken, and then nonchalantly rides by on her horse, pretending she does not know he is there (v. 2991-3045). As she gives him her horse, she is able to convince him to help her lady, the dame de Noroison.[194] Syncope serves to propel Yvain to action and help her, but more importantly, Yvain awakens from his trance-like state to reconcile with his lady. Donald Maddox explains, "the humor of the literal awakening is soon overshadowed by the metaphorical value it acquires retrospectively through the incremental moral and psychological significance that emerges from ensuing episodes" (39). As Maddox shows, Yvain has a metaphorical awakening as he recovers from his trance, regains his lost memory, and eventually repairs his marriage.

Yvain must first remember his offense. As he saves a lion from a snake, the lion becomes his faithful and loyal vassal (v. 3413), but when the two approach Laudine's fountain, Yvain is suddenly reminded of his lady. He almost loses his senses again and falls fainted on his sword, "Et chiet pasmés, tant fu dolans" (v. 3493). Combining the scenes from the *chansons de geste, romans d'antiquité,* and *Pyrame et Thisbé* in which a distressed lover desires to die, the scene of Yvain's loss of consciousness on his sword displays his deep despair. Echoing a similar episode

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193 "S'a grant honte, et plus grant eüst, / Së il s'aventure seüst. / Mais n'en set plus que nu se treuve." (v. 3021-3023).

194 In this battle the narrator illustrates Yvain's valiance by saying he strikes with his sword better than Roland (v. 3235-3237), and by comparing him to a lion attacking deer (v. 3203), which foreshadows his name change to the *chevalier au lion*. In his victory against Count Alier, Yvain is also able to prove that the can remain loyal to an oath, and the service that he gives to the lady of Noroison "peut sans doute apparaitre comme le rachat de la faute commise envers Laudine" (Baumgartner, *Yvain* 66). Yvain fails to defend his lady's fountain, but awakens from his folly to help another lady in need and defend her land against the invading Count Alier.

in *Pyrame et Thisbé*,[195] the lion thinks that Yvain is dead and also tries to kill himself with the sword, thus showing his complete devotion to his master. The lion's actions illustrate feudal loyalty, and also show similarities to distressed knights who no longer wish to live after the death of their comrade, such as Polynice in the *Roman de Thèbes*. Unlike *Pyrame*, Yvain regains consciousness and the lion stops himself, but Yvain's awakening only causes him to faint again on the steps near the fountain, "Decoste le perron se pasme" (v. 3523). His regaining consciousness presents the crisis and realization of his sin, and this becomes a "catalyst to narrative development" (Maddox 38) and propels the story forward, as Yvain will take the steps necessary to reconcile with Laudine.

The delay in narration that Yvain's continuous fainting creates allows the narrator to conjoin this episode with Lunette's imprisonment and insert a means for Yvain to see Laudine. While Yvain is lamenting, the narrator states that Lunette is in a nearby prison, hears him, and waits for him to regain consciousness to talk to him (v. 3559-65).[196] In a rather comic exchange, Yvain and Lunette try to convince each other that their grief is worse.[197] Yvain's fainting, however, serves the purpose of propelling him out of his despair and into action to help Lunette and find Laudine. Yvain undergoes many other trials and adventures before finding his love, and he will once again break an oath, as he does not arrive on time to defend Lunette because he was

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[195] Ironically, in *Pyrame et Thisbé* Pyrame mistakenly thinks that a lion has killed his love, but in the *Chevalier au Lion* the lion is the faithful companion.

[196] Maintenant qu'il fu relevés / De pamisons, si l'apela" (v. 3564-3565).

[197] Lunette says that she is accused of treason toward her lady and will be killed if she finds no defense. The scene becomes more ironic to the reader as Yvain and Lunette do not recognize each other, until she says she needs Yvain to defend her. The mistaken identities allow the narrator to reiterate how Lunette helped Yvain, and the sin that Yvain committed against his lady.

delayed defeating Harpin the giant.[198] While this battle distracts him from his promise to Lunette, his victory earns him the name of the "chevaliers au leon" (v. 4285), which will help him regain Laudine's affection. Yvain's knightly prowess and reputation grows,[199] and Norris Lacy shows that Yvain serves others just as the lion serves him. Moreover, the lion "represents not only courage and strength but also the ideals of devotion and service," and is therefore the "personification of his master's new purpose and resolve" (*Craft* 21). Chrétien's technique of *conjointure* combined with the descriptions of the other characters who search for the *chevalier au lion* and retrace his adventures remind the reader of Yvain's valiance and strength as a knight that make him a suitable knight to defend Laudine's fountain.

Despite his knightly reputation, lovesickness is killing Yvain, as he explains that he gave his heart to love, "Mesire Yvains, qui sans retour / Avoit son cuer mis en amour, / Vit bien que durer ne porroit, / Mais pour amors enfin morroit" (v. 6501-6504). Even the best doctors cannot heal love's wounds, and the narrator emphatically says that if someone can be healed from something other than love, they do not loyally love (v. 5381-5384).[200] Yvain's last act of desperation is to return to the fountain and provoke the storm until his lady forgives him (v. 6507-6516), but Lunette again uses trickery and convinces Laudine to choose the "chevalier au leon" (v. 6626).[201] Laudine agrees to take Yvain as her husband again since she made an oath.

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198 He agrees to help the Castle of Tarse defeat Harpin the giant only if the battle is early enough to allow him to still help Lunette. However, the people of Tarse convince him to stay too long and he arrives late to Lunette (v. 3939-4322).

199 He follows the rules of courtly love by helping all ladies in need (Capellanus 152), first defending the youngest daughter of the King of Noire Epine against her sister, and then fighting for the youngest daughter and freeing the three hundred young girls at *le chastel de Pesme Aventure*.

200 In this passage, the narrator also returns to his idea from the prologue that love is in decline. He states that he would provide more details of love's wound but that people would think he is recounting fairy tales because they are no longer in love and do not want to hear about it (v. 5385-5392).

201 Lunette convinces Laudine to find the *chevalier au lion* to defend the fountain, but says that she must first reconcile him with his lady because he is dying from love's suffering (v. 6604). The comedic irony continues, as

However, in a critique that highlights the gravity of Yvain's fault against his lady, Laudine says that breaking an oath is the worst possible act, "Et se ne fust de parjurer / Trop laide chose et trop vilaine …" (v. 6758-6759). Yvain's fault is great, but he receives forgiveness and his joy makes him forget his past suffering (v. 6796-6798).

As we have seen in the *Chevalier au lion (Yvain)*, the narrative functions of syncope guide the text and aid in the *conjointure*, as Laudine's fainting causes Yvain to fall in love, and then his broken oath causes him to faint and enter a trance-like state of unconsciousness. His awakening from his trance then leads to his second realization and deeper understanding of his lack of fidelity. As a result, his repeated fainting becomes a catalyst that culminates with the reconciliation of love. In an age where love is in decline, as the narrator says, this text offers examples of faults in love, but also a true and devoted lover who reconciles with his wife. While *Yvain* is not a perfect example of courtly love, certain elements are obvious and become more prevalent in the *Chevalier de la Charrette*. Chrétien wrote the *Charrette* during the same period, and in this work the lovers' trance becomes the most important element, as Lancelot desires to serve his lady.

Le Chevalier de la Charrette

In the unfinished work of the *Chevalier de la Charrette* written between 1177 and 1181 (Hult 10), trance-like instances of syncope illustrate the love that overwhelms Lancelot, as the romance contains four major love-struck trances, and other descriptions of unconsciousness.[202]

Laudine is the only one unaware of the truth behind Lunette's ruse. When Lunette finally reveals that Yvain is the *chevalier au lion*, Laudine knows that she is trapped by her promise to help the knight and must forgive him in order to avoid breaking her oath.

[202] Lancelot's trances (v. 562, 715, 1393, 3675-3678); characters think Lancelot has fainted (v. 1432, 4297); they think Guinevere is dead (v. 4247).

While trances are a sign and a symptom of lovesickness and a marker of courtly love in *Yvain*, the paradigm enlarges to include trances that represent all-consuming courtly love. In *Cligès*, Alexandre's fixation on the shirt made by Soredamor prefigures Lancelot's mesmerized state upon seeing Guinevere's comb. Moreover, in the *Chevalier au Lion*, Yvain's daylong courtly love trance prepares readers for Lancelot's complete unmindfulness as he almost falls out a window, goes into a ford, and fights backwards so that he can see his lady.

Lancelot is both a man of action, and a pensive, wandering knight who strives to follow the courtly code. In the prologue of the *Chevalier de la Charrette*, the narrator states explicitly that his "dame de Chanpaigne" charged him to write this "romans" and gave him both the "matiere" and the "san" (v. 1-28).[203] Since Marie de Champagne is the great-granddaughter of Guillaume IX, the poet who promoted *fin'amor*, it is therefore fitting that this romance be Chrétien's most courtly work (Aubailly 9-10). Similar to his previous works, it is not overtly clear if Chrétien criticizes or advocates for courtly love. In his analysis, Norris Lacy states that Lancelot often appears as a clumsy and comic knight, but that he does not lose his worth. He explains, "the two presentations of the hero -sublime and ridiculous- co-exist in a constant state of ambiguity, which, instead of constituting … a denunciation of *courtoisie*, simply makes it possible to assign either view to the narrator. It has rather the effect of *obscuring* the narrator's point of view, of disengaging him from his text" (*Craft* 56). Nevertheless, it is in these moments of clumsiness that syncope abounds and allows the reader to understand Lancelot's inner emotions and struggles. C.S. Lewis explains that Chrétien often uses allegory to talk about the inner world of a character, "as if men could not easily grasp the reality of moods and emotions without turning them into shadowy *persons*. Allegory, besides being many other things, is the

[203] All citations from the *Chevalier de la Charrette* come from Aubailly's edition. Aubailly also notes the importance of the *matière* and the *san* in his introduction.

subjectivism of an objective age" (30). He provides the example of the scene in which Lancelot jumps on the cart. Reason tries to get Lancelot to consider the shame he will endure, but Love orders him to get on the cart, and he obeys (v. 365-377). Lewis says, "a later poet would have told us directly -though not, after all, without metaphor- what Lancelot was feeling" (30). Much as the use of allegory helps the reader understand the inner state of a character, syncope, whether in fainting or a trance, alerts the other characters and the reader of an internal struggle with emotions. Lancelot's love trances are an obvious external sign that love's force completely controls him.

The reader does not see love at first sight and the beginning of the relationship, but Lancelot's love for Guinevere in the *Charrette* is "une donnée immédiate" (Baumgartner, *Yvain* 74), as Lancelot's first appearance in the text shows him searching for his lady. In this romance, Lancelot rides on the dwarf's cart, a symbol of dishonor and treason (v. 321-338), in order to search for the kidnapped Guinevere. After learning that Méléagant has the queen, Lancelot and Gauvain take different paths and encounter many trials on their way to save her. Although he earns the reputation as the dishonored knight on the cart, Lancelot proves his valiance and courtliness as he fights other knights, crosses many perilous passages, including the *Pont de l'Espee*, and helps other young ladies in need while remaining faithful to Guinevere. Moreover, during his duel with Méléagant to rescue Guinevere, King Baudemagus supports Lancelot over his own son because of Lancelot's *courtoisie* and Méléagant's *demesure*. Unfortunately, Lancelot's trials are not over after rescuing the queen because he must undergo many tests from his lady due to the shame of the cart.

An examination of Lancelot's four trances in the *Charrette* reveals syncope's role in showing Lancelot's intensifying love, and illustrating his courtliness and submission to his lady.

Syncope also simultaneously slows and propels the narration as other characters try to discern the reason for his trance and discover his identity. Each instance uses a different expression to describe Lancelot's behavior and relates his trance to sleep or unconsciousness.

Lancelot's first trance arrives soon after jumping on the cart when he and Gauvain enter the castle with the dwarf. The next morning, Lancelot begins to intensely stare, "as fenestres devers la pree / s'an vint li chevaliers pansis / (cil qui sor la charrete ot sis) / et esgardoit aval les prez" (v. 540-543). Describing his state with the adjective "pansis," the narrator says that Lancelot ignores Gauvain and the young lady who are in the middle of a conversation. His statement that he does not even know what the two are discussing, "…Ne sai de quoi; / ne sai don les paroles furent" (v. 548-549), gives the impression that he is a bystander ignoring the other two characters, and redirects attention to the pensive Lancelot. First only thinking about his lady and now seeing her, Lancelot's trance grows and his awareness of the outside world disappears even more as he sees a knight, three young ladies, a great knight, and his queen approaching. He follows his lady with his eyes to the extent that he almost falls out the window.

> Li chevaliers de la fenestre
> conut que c'estoit la reïne;
> de l'esgarder onques ne fine,
> molt antentis et molt li plot,
> au plus longuemant que il pot.
> Et quant plus ne la pot veoir,
> si se vost just lessier cheoir
> et trebuchier aval son cors;
> et ja estoit demis defors

quant messier Gauvains le vit;
sel trait arrieres, se il dit:
“Merci, sire, soiez an pes!
Por Deu nel vos pansez jamés
que vos faciez tel desverie;
a grant tort haez vostre vie. (v. 560-574).

Thankfully for Lancelot, Gauvain notices that he is falling and pulls him back inside, but Gauvain’s statement highlights the misunderstandings that trances create. Both Gauvain and the young lady relate his pensive state to his shame over the cart, as Gauvain says Lancelot should not hate his life and kill himself, while the young lady thinks he should die because of his dishonor (v. 579-582). The reason for a trance is difficult to decipher, and other characters assume it is due to sin or distress, or become so curious that they often ask. In this instance, Gauvain and the young lady wrongly assume the reason why Lancelot is *pansis*, but the reader knows that Lancelot’s eyes follow his queen. As we have noted previously, Catherine Clément terms depression as a “social syncope” (47) because the person withdraws from society, and love at first sight as a “shared syncope” (33) that makes the world around disappear (Clément 273). She also calls love a type of social syncope (277), because when one is in love, “le flux du regard ne peut plus s’échapper ailleurs; il est si détaché du monde alentour qu’il ne peut plus rien voir (Clément 185). It is evident that Lancelot suffers from a social syncope as he is completely unaware of his surroundings and almost falls out the window, showing his deep attachment to the queen.

Lancelot’s second trance-like state arrives soon after, when he and Gauvain take different paths in order to find Guinevere, who is being held captive at Baudemagus’s castle. Lancelot

takes the more perilous path of the *Pont de l'Espee*, and the further he goes, the more lost in thought he becomes because of the force of love that controls him.

> Et cil de la charrete panse
> con cil qui force ne desfanse
> n'a vers Amors qui li justise;
> et ses pansers est de tel guise
> que lui meïsmes en oblie;
> ne set s'il est, ou s'il n'est mie;
> ne ne li manbre de son non
> ne set ou va, ne set don vient (v. 711-719).

The narrator uses several expressions to indicate Lancelot's behavior such as the verbs "panse" and "justise," while also including that his thoughts, "pansers," are so intense that he forgets himself, "lui meïsmes en oblie." As discussed, this expression shows his unmindfulness of social etiquette.[204] To emphasize his unawareness and disorientation, the narrator adds that Lancelot does not know if he exists, what his name is, if he is armed, where he is going, or where he comes from. In the *Charrette*, Lancelot's identity is closely linked to his lady and becomes a major theme in the romance. Baumgartner suggests that Lancelot does not know where he is or what he is doing at the same time that the reader is also trying to discover Lancelot's identity and what he will do (*Yvain* 120-121).

While Lancelot is lost in thought, his horse continues to lead him on the path, and "c'est donc le cheval qui assure l'avancée du récit et qui assume seul et très spontanément le rituel de l'errance chevaleresque" (Baumgartner, *Yvain* 117). Lancelot's social syncope causes him to be a static character, but the narration still progresses because the horse keeps moving and leads him

[204] Discussed in *Yvain* (Sutherland 169).

to the ford. Baumgartner explains that the motif of absentmindedness that love creates is first found in Bernard de Ventadour's famous *canso* in which the lover is lost after looking into his lady's eyes (*Yvain* 119).[205] Lancelot is definitely lost after seeing his lover at the window and continues to fixate on the image of her in his mind.[206] Sutherland, expanding on the motif, shows that Chrétien treats the theme more dramatically and humorously than Ventadour since Lancelot is lost in thought at a moment when he should "have his wits about him" (188) as he approaches another knight at the ford.

The guardian notices Lancelot's unmindfulness when he does not respond to the warnings to stop. The knight warns Lancelot three times not to enter the water, but the narrator reiterates four times that Lancelot is lost in thought and does not hear anything.[207] When Lancelot's horse goes to drink, the knight attacks, and Lancelot feels the coldness of the water. He awakens like a man from sleep, "toz estormiz an estant saut / ausi come cil qui s'esvoille" (v. 768-769), and this description explains Lancelot's ambiguous state that resembles sleep, but also shows that the depth of his trance is enough to cause confusion when he awakens. Not understanding why he was hit, and insisting that he did not hear anything, Lancelot justifies his actions because he was lost in thought. He replies, "Dahez ait qui vos oï onques / ne vit onques mes, qui je soie! / Bien puet estre- mes je pansoie- / que le gué me contredeïstes" (v. 788-791),

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[205] The third stanza of *Quan vei la lauzeta mover* by Bernard de Ventadour (Hill 45).
Anc non agui de me poder
Ni no fui meus de l'or'en çai
Que'm laissat en sos olhs vezer,
En un miralh que mout mi plai;
Miralhs, pos me mirei en te,
M'an mort li sospir de preon,
Qu'aissi'm perdei com perdet se
Lo bels Narcissus en la fon (v. 17-24).

[206] Following Capellanus's definition of love that we have discussed, Lancelot has a "pensée obsédante de cette beauté" (47); "a cele seule panes tant / qu'il n'ot ne voit ne rien n'antant" (v. 723-724).

[207] v. 735-737, 744-745, 752a, 753.

and then attacks the guardian of the ford, until the knight's lady begs for mercy. As we will see in the *Conte du Graal*, Arthur's court has rules of *courtoisie*, such that a knight should not disturb another knight who is lost in thought, and Lancelot thinks that being lost in thought is an acceptable excuse. In this scene, Baumgartner explains that the "*panser* d'amour" shows the risks of passion, but Lancelot's triumph over the knight and the way in which he obeys the demand for mercy from the young lady shows that Lancelot "sait observer les conduites qui, selon le prologue du *Chevalier au lion*, caractérisent les vrais amants: la prouesse, la générosité, la courtoisie et la parfaite soumission aux exigences féminines" (*Yvain* 120). Lancelot may be completely lost in thought and may appear ridiculous being led by his horse, but he is able to come back to reality and follow the rules of courtly love.

These first two love trances make Lancelot unaware of the outside world and almost cause him bodily harm, but the third instance of syncope illustrates the growing force of love. As Lancelot continues on his quest to rescue Guinevere, he meets a young lady who tests his faithfulness to his queen, but she soon realizes that Lancelot is devoted to someone else (v. 1263-1265) and offers to help him on his quest. She tries to talk to him, but the narrator says that Lancelot prefers to be lost in thought because love's wound keeps getting worse, "pansers li plest, parlers li grieve. / Amors molt sovant li escrieve / la plaie que feite li a" (v. 1335-1337), and that medicine will not heal his wounds. Following the Ovidian descriptions of love, the reader recognizes Lancelot's lovesickness and understands that Guinevere is the source of Lancelot's thoughts.

The motif of the wandering, pensive knight continues as Lancelot's thoughts deepen and the young lady is able to redirect their path so that Lancelot does not notice the fountain and stone steps. When Lancelot finally notices the change in route and insists on returning to the

original path, they both notice a beautiful golden ivory comb. As he picks it up, he quickly becomes fixated on the hair in the comb, "Quant il le tint, molt longuemant / l'esgarde et les chevox remire" (v. 1392-1393). The intensity of his gaze is noted by the verbs "esgarder" and "remirer," and Lancelot's comical fascination on the comb is accentuated as the young lady laughs hysterically and does not want to explain her laughter. Similar to Guinevere in *Cligès* who laughs at Alexandre and Soredamor when the two lovers focus on Alexandre's shirt, the amused character is privy to information. The hair in the comb mesmerizes Lancelot without his understanding the significance, but the young lady knows that the comb belongs to Guinevere.

However, the tone of the scene changes when the young lady gives in to Lancelot's pleading and reveals that the comb belongs to Guinevere. Shock causes him to fall forward on his horse in a fainted-like state, without a voice and without color.

> Quant cil l'ot, n'a tant de vertu
> que tot nel coveigne ploier;
> par force l'estut apoier
> devant a l'arçon de la sele.
> Et quant ce vit la dameisele,
> si s'an mervoille et esbaïst,
> qu'ele cuida que il cheïst.
> S'ele ot peor ne l'en blasmez,
> qu'ele cuida qu'il fust pasmez.
> Si ert il, autant se valaoit;
> molt po de chose s'an failloit
> qu'il avoit au cuer tel dolor

que la parole et la color

ot une grant piece perdue (v. 1424-1437).

Lancelot's sudden fall resembles a loss of consciousness, as the surprising news coupled with his growing love sends him into another trance-like state. Due to his sudden slump on the horse, the young lady thinks that Lancelot is fainting from his horse and runs to keep him from falling, but her movement breaks his trance and he is ashamed to see her running towards him (v. 1438-1445).[208] To this point in the chosen texts of this study, shame is not a common response after an instance of syncope. Garsion in the *Chanson d'Antioche* faints from shame when he loses his city, Polynice in the *Roman de Thèbes* is not ashamed to faint after the loss of Tydée, and as we will see in the *Lancelot en prose*, Claudas is ashamed that his men see him lose consciousness. In the *Charrette*, Lancelot's actions shame him as they reveal his love for the queen. As evidenced in Old French literature, fainting does not diminish a knight's prowess, since fainting is "a conventional signal that a man or woman [is] very seriously in love" (Mieszkowski 51), and "by romance convention, it is the greatest warriors and the greatest lovers who faint" (50). However, it is notable that Lancelot's reaction to the comb breaks the courtly code of discretion.[209] Since the comb is a metonymy for his lady, his fixation on the comb discloses his thoughts. No longer laughing, the young lady does not wish to shame Lancelot further by revealing that she thought he was falling, and says that she is only trying to grab the comb (v. 1446-1450).

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[208] Et la pucele est descendue
et sic ort quanqu'ele pot corre
por lui retenir et secorre,
qu'ele ne le volsist veoir
por rien nule a terre cheoir.
Quant il la vit, s'en ot vergoigne,
si li a dit: "Por quell besoigne
venistes vos ci devant moi?" (v. 1438-1445).

[209] According to Capellanus, when a lover sees his lady, he must "éviter tout signe et la considérer comme une étrangère afin que quelque espion à l'affût de leurs relations ne puisse trouver matière à médisance" (*Traité* 151).

Even though only a brief second passes as the lady quickly jumps off her horse to help Lancelot, the detailed descriptions of his shock and reaction pause narrative time as the reader focuses on the immobile Lancelot. His revealed emotions become even more apparent when he keeps the hair in the comb and adores it,

> Jamés oel d'ome ne verront
> nule chose tant enorer,
> qu'il les comance a aorer
> et bien cent mile foiz les toche
> et a ses ialz et a sa boche,
> et a son front et a sa face (v. 1460-1465).

The narrator describes the hair as Lancelot's most prized possession (v. 1479-1495), and Lancelot feels safe and healed (v. 1472-1473). The narrator further says that Lancelot does not need any other help because he has the hair, "Car an ces chevox tant se fie / qu'il n'a mestier de lor aïe" (v. 1477-1478). In *Cligès*, the narrator mocks Alexandre who acts like a madman because of hair (v. 1633-1634), but the narrator of the *Charrette* recounts Lancelot's infatuation with Guinevere's hair that turns to idolatry as he adores it and puts his trust in the object. Lancelot's behavior seems excessive, and C.S. Lewis explains that the "love religion often begins as a parody of the real religion" (20). He adds that the reader must be "prepared for a certain ambiguity in all those poems where the attitude of the lover to his lady or the Love looks at first sight most like the attitude of the worshipper to the Blessed Virgin or to God" (21). Much as Yvain gets on his knees before his lady to ask for forgiveness (*Yvain* v. 6720), Lancelot's actions show that he follows the love religion.

Lancelot's fourth and final trance-like state in the *Charrette* illustrates his adherence to the courtly code and submission to his lady. Lancelot successfully crosses the *Pont de l'Espee* and arrives at the castle of King Baudemagus, but Méléagant refuses to give up Guinevere without a fight.[210] Paralleling Lancelot's first trance in which he watches Guinevere from the window, Guinevere now watches Lancelot from a similar location. Knowing that Lancelot will regain his strength if he knows his lady is watching, the young lady next to Guinevere asks the queen who the knight is, and Guinevere reveals that his name is *Lancelot du Lac* (v. 3660). This is the first time in the text that Lancelot is named, and as soon as the reader discovers his name, the other characters do as well, as the young lady shouts his name from the window, "a molt haute voiz: "Lancelot! / Trestorne toi et si esgarde / qui est qui de toi se prant garde!" (v. 3666-3669). As the search for identity and the search for his lady are intertwined, both quests seem to be achieved at the same time.

Lancelot immediately fixates on his lady and the scene turns to parody as he fights Méléagant backwards.This instance of syncope differs from the previous three trances because Lancelot is not lost in thought or fixated on an object, but is mesmerized by his lady.

> trestorne soi et voit amont
> la chose de trestot le mont
> que plus desirroit a veoir,
> as loges de la tor seoir.
> Ne puis l'ore qu'il l'aparçut
> ne se torna ne ne se mut

[210] Baudemagus, thinking his son to be unreasonable, gives Lancelot the advantage by offering him the best armor and healing his wounds. As a cultural side note, the narrator describes the doctor that Baudemagus gets for Lancelot as an old Christian man who knows how to heal better than the doctors in Montpellier (v. 3481-85). This brief note shows awareness of the medical culture with Montpellier as one of the prime centers of medical learning. It also proves that Baudemagus offers Lancelot special treatment.

de vers li ses ialz ne sa chiere,

eins se desfandoit par derriere (v. 3672-3678).

He struggles to keep his eyes focused on her alone, which the narrator emphasizes with "ne se torna ne ne se mut / de vers li ses ialz ne sa chiere," and the world around seems to disappear as he fights poorly, swinging his sword randomly behind his back (v. 3700). As *Erec et Enide* and *Yvain* demonstrate, love starts to decline when a lady thinks her love is cowardly in combat, and the young lady insults Lancelot and tells him to turn around and fight. The narrator describes the controlling force of love that makes Lancelot regain his strength and fight (v. 3720-3721), but Lancelot continues to focus on Guinevere by strategically pushing Méléagant in her direction so he can stare at her, this time facing forwards. The goal of the battle no longer seems to be to defeat the enemy, but to fight valiantly for his lady.

Ensi Lanceloz molt sovant

le menoit arriers et avant

par tot la ou boen li estoit,

et totevoies s'arestoit

devant la reïne sa dame (v. 3745-3749).

In addition to love at first sight or love entering the heart by means of the eyes, Guinevere's eyes control Lancelot, as the narrator explains that Guinevere lit a flame in Lancelot's heart by looking at him (v. 3750-3751), and he must do everything to stay within her sight. Further showing himself to be his lady's vassal, Lancelot is the submissive courtly knight and spares Méléagant's life at Guinevere's request.

If Lancelot's actions are not enough to prove his true feelings, the narrator adds that Lancelot's love is stronger than Pyrame's, "Donc le dut bien Lanceloz faire, / qui plus ama que

Piramus, / s'onques nus hom pot amer plus" (v. 3802-3804). While this allusion to the Ovidian tragic lovers, Pyrame and Thisbé, emphasizes the depth of Lancelot's love, it is also tempting to see the impossible love that develops between Lancelot and Guinevere. Moreover, Sutherland, emphasizing the verb *penser*, explains that Pyrame and Thisbé are "entirely engrossed by love, and spend their time in anguished meditation," but that Chrétien "uses the technically accepted terms to denote the state, but, with a sly appreciation of the humorous possibilities of translating what is meant only to be an extravagant protestation into real action …" (188). From all of these examples of syncope, the parody of the wandering, pensive knight cannot be denied as Lancelot almost falls out of a window, wanders into the water, fixates on a comb, and fights awkwardly backwards.

These trances mark Lancelot's devotion to Guinevere, but his love will not be complete until he is reconciled to his lady. The instances of syncope that remain in the *Charrette* emphasize distress and lovesickness, and the latter part of the text follows Lancelot's offense to Guinevere and his pleas for pardon, the danger of their love being revealed, a renewed conflict between the couple, and Lancelot's tests of love. Beginning with the offense, Guinevere is ashamed that Lancelot hesitated before riding on the cart, and confuses everyone when she refuses to talk to him after he has rescued her. Similar to other lovesick characters, however, her symptoms reveal her true feelings, and she becomes immobile when she hears a rumor that Lancelot has been killed. Trying to use discretion, Guinevere says her distress is justified since Lancelot saved her life, and then she mourns in private. Similar to Didon, Thisbé, and Enide, she accuses herself of folly, guilt torments her, and she desires to die. Due to her physical condition, other characters think that she is dead, "La reïne an tel duel estut / dues jorz, que ne manja ne but, / tant qu'an cuida qu'ele fust morte" (v. 4245-4247). Chrétien uses a *brisure du couplet* in

this verse,[211] emphasizing the shock of the queen's death, and transitioning to Lancelot who receives the news.

This instance of social syncope slows the narration to emphasize Guinevere's distress, propels it to show Lancelot's similar despair, and then slows again to stress Lancelot's despair. Further alluding to *Pyrame et Thisbé*, this scene shows that Lancelot desires to kill himself when he thinks his lover is dead. While exaggerating Lancelot's suffering, the scene parodies the traditional *planctus* scene because Guinevere is still alive, similar to the episode in which Enide laments Erec. Lancelot acts on his desire by falling off of his horse and trying to strangle himself, but ironically, his men think that he has only fainted until they go to pick him up and notice the rope.

> Quant a terre cheü le voient
> cil qui avoec lui chevalchoient,
> si cuident que pasmez se soit,
> que nus del laz ne s'aparçoit
> qu'antor son col avoit lacié (v. 4295-4299).

Lancelot continues to lament and his monologue reveals his sincere desire to serve his lady, while the scene parodies the knight fainting from his horse and the distressed lover.[212]

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[211] La reïne an tel duel estut
dues jorz, que ne manja ne but,
tant qu'an cuida qu'ele fust morte.
Assez est qui noveles porte,
einçois la leide que la bele;
a Lancelot vient la novele (italics added; v. 4245-4250).

[212] The lovers are left in a despairing state until rumors again circulate that both of them are still alive. When the two realize the truth, Guinevere is more certain of Lancelot's devotion after hearing how he tried to kill himself (v. 4428-4435) while Lancelot quickly travels to court to speak with his lady and discover the cause of his *forfet* (v. 4481). As he presumed, Guinevere says that his shame comes from mounting the cart (v. 4484-4485). Lacy explains that it was not only the fact that Lancelot gets on the cart that upsets Guinevere, but "that he hesitates to do so, reluctant to commit an act contrary to his idea of a knight's honor" (*Craft* 9). Love and prowess "are not balanced:

The instances of syncope in the *Charrette* end after Guinevere pardons Lancelot's offense, and the lovers are reconciled. Similar to other characters healed of lovesickness that we have seen, Lancelot leaves so full of joy that he forgets his past torments (v. 4533-4535) because he has assurance of love, and syncope ceases. Unlike Chrétien's other romances, courtly love does not end in marriage, and its dangers are evident. For example, when Lancelot injures himself leaving Guinevere's room one night, the men of the castle wrongly accuse her of adultery with Keu, and Lancelot must come to Keu's defense to keep their secret.[213] As Maddox explains, Guinevere's awakening from sleep and her subsequent cover-up of her adulterous liaison with Lancelot propel the narration because Lancelot must duel with Méléagant (38-39). The first half of the narrative deals with Lancelot's struggle to control his lovesickness and rescue the kidnapped queen. Once he saves her and is reassured of his love, the narrative seems stagnant until the Queen's awakening provokes a new crisis.

Similar to the relationship of Soredamor and Fénice in *Cligès*, discretion and secrecy are important to Lancelot and Guinevere. Guinevere must conceal her true emotions at court while Lancelot must prove his fidelity. When Méléagant takes Lancelot prisoner so that he will not be able to fight in the duel, Guinevere is only able to hide her distress because King Baudemagus expresses the same shock at the disappearance of a great knight (v. 5205-5210), and the reader alone understands the true reason for her change in behavior. Moreover, when Lancelot is allowed to leave his prison to fight in a tournament, he undergoes a test of loyalty as a courtly

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love must rule supreme, with all other elements of the chivalric ideal -valor, adventure, renown- subordinated to it" (55).

213 Lancelot injuries his fingers on window bars and his blood becomes evidence of his presence in Guinevere's room. Méléagant accuses Keu of making love with the queen, and Guinevere must lie and say she had a nosebleed while Lancelot acts *courtois* and defends Keu's honor. In his article on awakenings, Donald Maddox offers an interesting analysis of Guinevere's awakening from sleep to her accusation of adultery. He examines both the literal and metaphorical awakenings and says that due to Méléagant's confusion of appearances versus reality, the narrative resumes and leads to Méléagant's defeat, "while preventing the metaphorical 'awakening' of the court to the truth about Lancelot and the Queen" (39). See Maddox p. 38-39.

knight, and must fight well or poorly according to Guinevere's command. Lewis says, "even when he is forgiven, his trials are not at an end. The tournament at the close of the poem provides Guinevere with another opportunity to exercise her power (28). Lancelot's obedience gives Guinevere great joy because she knows that he belongs to her (v. 5872-75); the tournament is a decisive test in Lancelot's loyalty because he obeys without hesitation (Aubailly 444).

As the *Chevalier de la Charrette* concludes, the love between Lancelot and Guinevere remains strong yet hidden. At the end of the romance, Méléagant's sister helps Lancelot escape, and Guinevere must continue to hide her emotions from the rest of the court, as the narrator says Guinevere's joy is so strong that she would reveal her secret if she let her body follow her heart, aparceüssent tost l'afeire / s'ainsi, veant toz, olsist feire / tot si con li cuers le volsist (v. 6839-6841). The remaining explanation combines the reason versus folly love argument that we first saw in the *Roman d'Enéas*, the strong passion of love that is almost impossible to keep hidden because of the external symptoms of love, the relationship of the body and heart in love, and the courtly rule of discretion. Unlike Lancelot who listens to Love over Reason and jumps on the cart, Guinevere listens to Reason and controls her feelings and outward display of love. She also follows the code of courtliness and waits until she is in private to allow herself to fully express her emotions. Chrétien left the *Chevalier de la Charrette* unfinished, and the texts says that the clerk Godefroiz de Leigni ends the story (v. 7100-7113). With this ending, Méléagant's sister, a *demoiselle* that Lancelot recently served, helps Lancelot escape from the tower where he is imprisoned, and as a result, he defeats the enemy. The text concludes with the rejoicing of the court because of Lancelot's victory. Aubailly wonders if Godefroi remained true to Chrétien's intents since the "roman laisse percer le désir de Guenièvre de poursuivre sa liaison coupable, ce qui tout en étant conforme à son portrait celtique tend à … la ravaler au sang de simple amante"

(445). The *Charrette* is distinct from Chrétien's other romances because the relationship does not end in marriage, nor show the impossibility of the courtly relationship, as in *Erec et Enide* and *Cligès*. Jewers explains, "where Chrétien would have had to resolve the conflict of duty and adultery … Godefroi de Lagny's tacked-on conclusion avoids the central questions that launched the Prose *Lancelot*" (55). The reader is sure of Lancelot and Guinevere's feelings of love, but is left in suspense as to how their secret relationship develops. As we will see in the next chapter, the *Lancelot en prose* expands on this courtly relationship. As both Capellanus and Chrétien worked at the same court, the influences of *fin'amor* are evident in the romance. The *Charrette* most probably presents the courtly romance that Marie de Champagne requested, as numerous situations illustrate the rules of courtly love (Baumgartner, *Yvain* 68).

Lancelot's identity seems established, and his love strong, but it is this identity found in courtly love that Chrétien explores in his last romance, the *Conte du Graal*. C.S. Lewis highlights the paradox in Lancelot's character as one who appears to be pious but also as one who surrenders to the love religion as he bows before his lady.[214] In the *Charrette*, Lancelot is the *cortois* knight, but his strict adherence to courtly love becomes problematic. In Capellanus's first two books of his treatise, he presents the rules for courtly love, but the third book is a retraction. Lewis explains that Capellanus recognizes that the rift between the world of courtly love and that of the Christian religion is "irremediable" (40), and that "the whole world of courtesy exists only by leaving the religious side of the question out for a moment" (41). This irremediable rift becomes even more evident in the *Queste del Saint Graal*, as the paradox of

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[214] Lewis makes a reference to the scene when Lancelot enters into Guinevere's room, and he kneels before her bed and adores her like a relic (v. 4651-4653). Lewis states, "the irreligion of the religion of love could hardly go further. Yet Chrétien -whether he is completely unconscious of the paradox, or whether he wishes, clumsily enough, to make some amends for these revolting passages- represents his Lancelot as a pious man and goes out of his way to show him dismounting when he passes a church, and entering to make his prayer; by which according to Chrétien, he proves both his courtesy and wisdom (29).

Lancelot's character, coming from the courtly love, creates other trances and instances of syncope due to sin. His meditation on love becomes a sort of paralysis. In the *Charrette*, Lancelot's trance-like instances of syncope show his longing for love and his desire to adhere to the courtly code. In the *Conte du Graal*, Chrétien shows the rift between courtly love and religion with the character of Perceval, and syncope is instrumental in illustrating sin and a longing for spiritual truth. The character of Lancelot is absent from the *Conte du Graal*, and Chrétien uses a new knight, Perceval, that is far from the courtly world.

Le Conte du Graal

The *Conte du Graal (Perceval)*, written between 1181 and 1185, is Chrétien's fifth and final romance. Chrétien also left this work unfinished, and as a result, there are many continuations and elaborations of the grail quest. In this story, the reader sees Perceval's transformation from an innocent boy in the forest to a knight who is spiritually aware.[215] Syncope serves a critical role in the romance, beginning with his mother's deathly faint, because it is a key cause of Perceval's silence before the grail. Moreover, his trance-like states illustrate his identity as a courtly knight, as well as his unmindfulness of important advice and sin. Throughout his transformation, Perceval also gains a greater understanding of *caritas*, or love of God and others, that Keith Busby states as a major theme of the prologue and possibly the entire romance (14).[216] While flattering *Felipes de Flandres* as an example of charity, the narrator

[215] Norris Lacy also explains, "traditionally, *Perceval* is considered a *Bildungsroman*: the story of a naive and ignorant youth who is initiated successively into chivalry, love, and finally religion and who thus passes from a human level to a moral and almost divine level" (*Craft* 10).

[216] Busby also gives Augustine's definition as "the motion of the soul toward the enjoyment of God for His own sake, and the enjoyment of one's self and one's neighbour for the sake of God" (14).

quotes several Biblical passages,[217] including 1 John 4:16, as he says, "Dex est charitez, et qui vit / En charité, selonc l'escrit / Sainz Polz ou je lo vi et lui, / Il meint an Deu et Dex en lui" (v. 45-48).[218] The reader can expect Perceval's understanding of *caritas* to be linked with his understanding of God.

The *Conte du Graal* is unique in Chrétien's romances because of the increased focus on religion, but also because of its particular bipartite structure following two characters: one section following Perceval and another the adventures of Gauvain (Busby 10). As the reader follows Perceval, we see him becoming a knight and learning lessons from his mother and then Gornemant. Perceval misuses the lessons by taking many of them literally, and thus has confrontations with many knights and their ladies. Yet Perceval proves to be a better knight than Arthur or his court would have thought as he continually sends prisoners back to Arthur's court. The prisoners each tell Keu that he will pay for having slapped the *demoiselle* who said Perceval is the best knight. When Perceval helps Blanchefleur defend her castle against the invading knights, he falls in love, and love trances similar to those of Lancelot ensue. As he continues on his adventure to become a knight, Perceval discovers the castle of the Fisher King and sees the grail, but remains silent and does not ask about the meaning of the grail or the bleeding lance. When his cousin tells him of his sin, he leaves on the grail quest. After following Gauvain's story and then returning to Perceval, the reader discovers that Perceval has wasted five years wandering from adventure to adventure without praying and worshipping God, and that he must confess his sin.

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[217] 2 Corinthians 9:6, Matthew 6:3, 1 John 4:16. For further analysis about Philippe de Flandre's role in the prologue, see Busby. *Chrétien de Troyes : Perceval (Le Conte Du Graal)*.

[218] All citations for the *Conte du Graal* come from Méla's edition. Although the narrator writes that Paul says this, it is actually John. (Also noted in Haidu 116).

In addition to the instances of syncope surrounding the character of Perceval, the *Conte du Graal* contains two cases in which Arthur enters a trance, and two instances of fainting by different characters,[219] and these occur in the narration describing Gauvain.[220] Keith Busby argues for the importance of the Gauvain episodes to the rest of the story because the reader can compare Gauvain and Perceval, and better understand Perceval's development since Gauvain "does not undergo any development in the course of a particular poem" (Busby 52-53). Norris Lacy also labels Gauvain a "static character" that is a "model to be surpassed" (*Craft* 100). Just as Gauvain's character remains fairly consistent, the instances of syncope surrounding him also remain consistent with the traditional uses of the paradigm to show mistaken identities, fear, and injury. Most importantly, these instances reveal how Gauvain's reputation precedes him, whether by knowledge of previous knightly exploits or of his medical expertise. Busby discusses Gauvain's reputation and says,

> Perceval at the beginning of the romance was a young lad without a past, without a reputation, and without an identity; much of the poem is concerned with his acquisition of these. For Gauvain, however, the problem is quite the opposite: he has a long history, both within the text and without, a reputation second to none, and a name to match (*Perceval* 53-54).

Fainting first shows Gauvain's reputation as the knight who killed the father of Guinganbrésil. The lady of Escalvon welcomes Gauvain into the castle and falls in love with the knight whose identity she ignores, but upon discovering that Gauvain killed her father, she loses

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[219] Arthur (v. 866, 9055), the lady of Escavalon (v. 5796), and an injured knight (v. 6477).

[220] In *Perceval*, Gauvain first appears when Perceval injures Keu because he interrupts his love trance, and then Gauvain must leave Arthur's court to defend his honor since Guinganbrésil accuses him of treason. The reader follows him to a tournament where he defends Thibaut's youngest daughter, to the castle of Esclavon where the daughter kisses him not knowing he killed her father, on several adventures being led by the hideous, mocking lady, and finally to the *Liz de la Merveille* where he conquers the enchantments and the *Guez Perilleus* where he learns that he is staying at the castle of his mother and sister.

consciousness, "et cele chiet el pavement / et jut pasmee longuement" (v. 5795-5796). While her faint represents shock and distress, the narrator describes that this lady turns green in order to show her fainted and fearful state, similar to Ismène in the *Roman de Thebes* and Thisbé in *Pyrame et Thisbé*. Mistaken identities provoke fainting, and this episode also shows Chrétien's technique of *conjointure*. Guinganbrésil is the knight who originally accused Gauvain of treason, and his accusation began Gauvain's quest from the court to clear his name. As Gauvain is now allowed to leave the castle if he returns with the bleeding lance, Guinganbrésil links Gauvain to the grail quest.

Another example of fainting reveals Gauvain's past training as a medical practitioner. Gauvain encounters an injured knight who faints several times from pain, "et d'autre part parmi les flans / Li coroit a randon li sans. / Li chevaliers pasmez se fu / sovent del mal qu'il ot eü" (v. 6475-6478). Gauvain then awakens the knight by gently prodding him with his sword so that he can ask questions about his quest. While the knight's loss of consciousness follows the traditional paradigm of fainting from an injury and illustrates the intensity of his pain, the situation surrounding the knight's healing offers insight into Gauvain's expertise, as the narrator describes Gauvain as an able doctor who gathers herbs, checks the knight's pulse, and his temperature by touching his lips and cheeks. He diagnoses and treats the patient, and uses herbs that have diverse healing properties (v. 6822-83).[221] Busby explores Gauvain's expertise and says that "Gauvain's medical knowledge is unexplained" but that it "may refer to a now lost

[221] Gauvain says that he uses an herb that will heal the knight's pain and that according to the books can heal a sick tree and cause it to flower (v. 6857-6865).

tradition of Gauvain stories" (73).[222] This instance of fainting therefore allows the narrator to insert aspects of Gauvain's character that have not been mentioned previously.

While fainting illustrates Gauvain's established reputation, syncope is an integral part of Perceval's characterization, and this analysis begins with the first scene at his mother's house.[223] When seeing the visiting knights at his mother's home, Perceval's desire to become a knight is evident, but his questions and behavior reveal his ignorance. In a moment of foreshadowing, the cow herders know that Perceval's mother will lose her senses (v. 313) when she discovers her son's desire, and as expected, Perceval's mother loses consciousness when she hears him mention the word knight, "La mere se pasme a ce mot, / Qant chevalier nomer li ot" (v. 375-376). The motif of the mourning, fainting mother returns from *Alexis* and also *Thèbes*, but her loss of consciousness also unveils painful memories. Syncope provides a pause in action and serves as a transition for Chrétien, as he relates the story of the family's past when the mother awakens to lament her destiny. The reader learns that Perceval's father and two brothers were all great knights before their deaths, and that Perceval is the mother's only consolation (v. 450-451). Realizing Perceval will not change his mind about being a knight, the mother gives him several lessons, including that he should go to church and pray, but Perceval soon forgets or misinterprets all of his mother's advice.[224] As he leaves his crying mother, he turns around and sees her lying fainted, but appearing dead, "Si se retorne et voit chaüe / Sa mere au chief do pont

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222 Busby mentions this idea in *Gauvain in Old French Literature*. He states that Gauvain's role as a doctor has not been mentioned before and does not occur often in Old French literature (112), but does occur frequently in Middle Dutch literature (147). E.H. Ruck also mentions Gauvain's medical knowledge in her book, *Index of Themes and Motifs in 12th Century French Arthurian Poetry*. Although not used in this study, her book contains many lists of fainting from distress, other instances of distress, love trances, wounds, etc. in twelfth-century Arthurian works.

223 Differing from Chrétien's other romances, *Perceval* offers interesting insight into the childhood of the hero (Baumgartner, *Yvain* 23).

224 His mother says that he should help a lady in need, obtain a kiss and a ring from a lady that he loves, ask the name of a companion traveling with him, and go to churches and abbeys to pray to the Savior (v. 491-536).

arriere, / Et gist pasmee an tel meniere / Con c'ele fust chaüe morte" (v. 586-589). Perceval does not verify his mother's state, but continues on his way with the primary aim of going to Arthur's court, showing selfish desires and a lack of charity (Busby 19). The mother's ambiguous appearance continually links Perceval with his past, as he desires to know if she is still alive.

In the section on Perceval, syncope is also an important element of Chrétien's "mout bele conjunture" (*Erec et Enide* v. 14), as repeated references to the mother's loss of consciousness join together diverse episodes of the story. The first instance occurs after Perceval obtains the desired red armor from the knight at Arthur's court, and mistakes "the *signifiant* for the *signifié*" (Lacy, *Craft* 23).[225] He thinks that he is a knight, but then meets Gornemant, receives an education, and learns how to use armor. Among other pieces of advice that Perceval will again misinterpret or forget,[226] Gornemant tells Perceval that talking too much is a sin, and that he must go to church and pray to the Creator (v. 1597-1646). Refusing to stay longer with Gornemant, Perceval explains that he wants to return home because his mother fainted from distress when he left, but he does not know if she is still alive.

> Que pasmee la vi cheoir
> El pié do pont devant la porte,
> Si ne sai s'ele est vive ou morte.
> De doel de moi quant la laisai,
> Chaï pasmee, bien lo sai,
> Et por ce ne porroit pas estre,
> Tant que je saüse son estre,

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[225] This is also quoted in Busby, *Perceval* (19).

[226] Gornemant's advice includes telling Perceval to give mercy to a knight if asked, to give advice if asked, and to no longer say that he does something because it is what his mother told him to do it.

Que je feïsse lonc sejor,

Ainz m'en irai demain au jor. (v. 1542-1550)

This statement once again insists on the ambiguity of an unconscious state, and Perceval is concerned for his mother as he repeats twice that she fainted. Peter Haidu explains that in a series of events motivated by Perceval's self-interest to become a knight, his rejection of Gornemant's offer to stay because he wants to see his mother is the "first sign of charity he has shown" (Haidu 152).[227] Perceval's ambitions gradually become less selfishly motivated as he returns to check on his mother and helps others in need.

On his way home, Perceval helps the beautiful Blanchefleur and the castle of *Bel Repaire* defeat their enemies. The second reminder of fainting occurs when he wants to keep the land and stay with Blanchefleur, but the image of his unconscious mother is engraved on his memory, and delays his ambition,

Mais d'une [autre] molt plus li tient,

Que de sa mere li sovient

Que il vit pasmee cheoir,

S'a talant qu'il l'aille veoir

Plus grant que de nule autre chose. (v. 2857-2861).

As Rupert Pickens shows in the *Welsh Knight*, Perceval's quests are linked to his mother since he first goes in search for a noble man, finding Gornemant, in order to follow his mother's advice (Pickens 78), but then leaves Gornemant to find his mother. On his way home, he meets Blanchefleur, but again wishes to leave to find his mother (26). Pickens says that Perceval is "conceiving of his future only in terms of a *return* to his mother's manor" (26). Repeated mentions of the mother's faint are important to show that Perceval is continually being drawn

[227] Quoted in Busby, *Perceval* (25).

backwards. However, it is evident that Perceval's concern is more focused on curiosity about whether his mother is dead or alive than on her well-being. Although trying to "integrate his old world with the new" (Pickens, *Welsh Knight* 27), he plans to return to *Bel Repaire*, either making his mother a nun, or celebrating her life each year if she is dead (v. 2898-2903). The image of fainting continually draws Perceval to his past, but he does not yet understand the event's importance, true *caritas*, or his sin of leaving his mother behind.

Still on his way home, Perceval is once again distracted by an adventure, as he is welcomed to the castle of the Fisher King. This scene becomes a critical turning point in the story, as it links the mother's loss of consciousness and Perceval's trance-like states due to sin that we will soon examine. While at the castle, Perceval sees a young man carrying a white lance that drips blood and a young lady carrying a golden grail pass in front of him, but taking Gornemant's advice not to speak too literally, Perceval does not ask questions (v. 3129-3191). As he finds the castle mysteriously deserted when he awakens the next morning, Perceval leaves and meets his cousin who calls him "Percevaus li chaitis" (v. 3520), because he could have healed the sick king if he would have asked the meaning of the lance and the grail. His cousin explains that Perceval kept silent due to his sin of causing his mother to die from despair, "Por lo pechié, ce saiches tu, / De ta mere t'est avenu, / Qui est morte de doel de toi" (v. 3531-3533). Kisha Tracy explains that the Fisher King's "disability becomes a function of Perceval's maturation as a knight" (Tracy 108),[228] as his inability to heal the king is what makes him aware of his sin and eventually leads him on his spiritual quest. Furthermore, the third mention of his mother now resolves his curiosity of her health, as he discovers that his mother fainted dead

[228] The Fisher King is an example of the "equation of injury to sin" (Tracy 105), and it is interesting that Perceval's sin becomes intertwined with that of his host. While the narrator of *Perceval* describes the Fisher King's injuries, he does not describe his sin (v. 3445-3471). The prose romances of the *Lancelot en prose* will elaborate upon the Fisher King's character, specifically the *Queste del Saint Graal* that explains his sin. Kisha Tracy describes the Fisher King's injuries, sin, etc, in all the versions of this story.

away. He does not mourn his mother's death, but prays for her briefly, and says he no longer has a reason to return home. While Perceval's desire to see his mother has motivated him to this point, he now "remains unmoved and unmotivated by the experience" (Pickens, *WK* 29) and "is a knight without a quest object" (30). Percval's inability to heal the king makes him aware of his sin, but he still does not understand the consequences as he continues on his way.[229]

Perceval's quest for his mother may be over, but Chrétien will use a fourth reminder of the mother's faint, and a reminder of his resulting silence before the lance and grail, to cause Perceval to realize the gravity of his sin. However, as the *Conte du Graal* progresses, Perceval helps ladies in need and gradually shows more charity as a knight, but Chrétien uses instances of trance-like syncope to display the difference between Perceval's worldly and spiritual knighthoods. In Chrétien's *Chevalier de la Charrette*, Lancelot is the quintessential courtly knight who strives to obey his lady. Illustrating his devotion to Guinevere, Lancelot is continually lost in thought, in a trance-like state, wandering on his horse. In the *Conte du Graal*, Chrétien also shows Perceval as the love-struck courtly knight, lost in a trance, thinking about his lady Blanchefleur. In one particular scene, Perceval notices three drops of blood from an injured goose, and the contrasting red blood on the white snow mesmerizes him, as he forgets himself, signaled by the verb "s'oblie." D.R. Sutherland explains, "the courtly poet feels no disgrace in the 'unmindfulness' which love forces upon him, but harps upon it in order to show how truly 'fine' is the love he bears to his lady" (169).

Et li sanz et la nois ensanble

La fresche color li resanble

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[229] Further showing the importance of this scene and Perceval's increasing awareness of his sin, Donald Maddox examines Perceval's awakening from sleep the morning after remaining silent before the grail. He says, "Perceval's awakening is thus the moment at which the crisis begins its gradual invasions of his consciousness, as well as the moment from which the spiritual quality of his existence will intermittently develop before it culminates in his illumination on Good Friday" (40).

Qui est en la face s'amie,
Et panse tant que toz s'oblie,
Q'autresin estoit en son vis
Li vermauz sor lo blanc asis
con ces .III. gotes de sanc furent
Qui sor la blanche noif parurent.
En l'esgarder que il faisoit
Li est avis, tant li plaissoit,
Qu'il veïst la color novele
De s'amie qui tant est bele.
Percevaus sor les goutes muse,
tote la matinee i use, (v. 4133-4146).

Perceval's trance resembles a loss of consciousness, as he remains in place for the entire morning, in a deep contemplative state thinking about Blanchefleur. Keith Busby points out that, practically, the pause in narration created by this trance allows Arthur's army to find the knight for whom they have been searching (44).

Yet this scene also reveals further details about the paradigm of syncope. Firstly, the confusing states of syncope are clear. Arthur's army approaches Perceval and assumes that they have found a knight sleeping on his horse, "Tant que fors des tantes issirent / Escuier qui muser lo virent, / Si cuiderent qu'il someillast." (v. 4147-4149).[230] Just as the mother's unconscious state caused confusion for Perceval, Perceval's state of syncope now confuses Arthur's army. Similar to the scene in which the guardian of the ford warns Lancelot, Perceval does not hear

[230] Adding to the motif of absence surrounding Arthur first seen at the beginning of the *Chevalier au Lion*, Arthur is asleep and absent from his men when Sagremor tries to tell him about the sleeping knight (v. 4150-4153).

anything. As he breaks his trance to fight the attacking knights, he breaks Keu's arm and causes him to faint from pain, "Kex se pasme de la destrece" (v. 4249). Chrétien again uses fainting as an element of *conjointure* to link different episodes. Perceval successfully defeats Keu by unhorsing him, and thus fulfills his promise from the beginning of the romance when he says he will avenge the young lady that Keu slapped at court. Keu's faint follows the traditional paradigm of fainting after an injury, as it realistically describes his intense pain, but most interestingly syncope again causes confusion when the men think Keu is dead, "Et lo senechal pasmé troevent, / Si cuident tuit que il soit morz" (v. 4256-4257).[231] From these instances, Chrétien highlights the ambiguous nature of syncope that resembles sleep, unconsciousness, or death. The confusion then redirects attention to the fainted character, as the men mourn the supposed death of Keu, but also as they try to understand the deep thoughts of Perceval. Perceval shows no concern for his fainted enemy, but returns to his trance looking at the three drops of blood on the snow, "Et Percevaus sor les .III. gotes / Se rapoia desus sa lance" (v. 4260-4261).

His continued trance reveals the courtliness surrounding his behavior. It is clear that Chrétien highlights Perceval's first love trance with the verb "s'oblier," but Arthur and Gauvain now discuss the correct courtly behavior. When Arthur realizes that Keu is only injured and becomes angry with Perceval, Gauvain must remind him of one of his own laws that states that a knight must not disturb someone lost in thought (v. 4282-4291). Gauvain's statement elucidates the courtly code of Arthur's knights that includes a law dictating the trances of a knight. Trances commonly incite curiosity in other characters that try to awaken the pensive character and unveil their thoughts. In this scene, as the sun melts the snow, Perceval's thoughts are not as intense

[231] The text also offers an interesting cultural note about skeletal injuries, as a specialized doctor knows how to reset the shoulder and heal the fracture (v. 4267-4276).

since two of the drops of blood have disappeared,[232] and he expresses his frustration of having been pulled from his thoughts twice. He then reveals his thoughts to Gauvain and says that the drops of blood make him see the face of his "amie la bele" (v. 4387). Gauvain, perhaps with a bit of flattery because he wants to take Perceval back to Arthur's court, says that thinking such things are courtly and sweet, and only a madman would bother him (v. 4390-4393).[233] Gauvain's statement shows the love trance to be acceptable behavior, and that there is no disgrace in the unmindfulness of a courtly knight. Furthermore, the red and white colors remind Perceval of his lady Blanchefleur,[234] but as Jean-Marie Fritz shows, the colors also symbolize the blood dripping from the white lance at the castle of the Fisher King (30). While Perceval remains completely focused on his love, the reader is reminded of Perceval's unmindfulness of his sin and his silence. Perceval's trance-like instances of syncope show him to be a courtly knight, while his next period of unmindfulness reveals why he is unfit for the spiritual quest and is unable to heal the Fisher King.

After Gauvain and Perceval arrive at Arthur's court, a hideous *demoiselle* curses Perceval because of his silence at the castle of the Fisher King. Perceval refuses any other adventure until he discovers information about the grail (v. 4665-4670), but the narrator then shifts to Gauvain's

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232 Et neporquant li solauz ot
Dos des goutes do sanc remises
Qui sor la noif erent assises,
Et la tierce aloit remetant.
Por ce ne pansoit mie tant
Li chevaliers com il ot fait (v. 4358-4363).

233 "Cil pansers n'estoit pas villains, / Ainz estoit molt cortois et dolz, / Et cil estoit soz et estouz / Qui vostre cuer en removoit"

234 As stated in chapter two when describing Guilliadon's white and red appearance while she is unconsciousness in *Eliduc*, the red and white colors illustrate Blanchefleur's beauty because "red on white is an almost indispensable element of the standard female portrait" (Busby, *Perceval* 43).

story for fourteen hundred verses, and the reader is left in suspense.[235] A sudden transition back to Perceval reveals that he has wasted five years of his life in forgetfulness,

> .V. foiz passa avris et mais,
>
> Ce sunt .V. anz trestuit antier,
>
> Ainz que il entrast en mostier,
>
> Ne Deu ne sa croiz n'aora.
>
> Tot ensin .V. anz demora, (v. 6146-6150).

Jacques Ribard explains that time in the *Conte du Graal* has a strange elasticity as it stretches out during Perceval's trance before the three drops of blood on the snow, but then seems to shorten and weigh heavily during the five years that Perceval forgets God (104).[236] Ribard's quote shows that Chrétien delays narrative time as attention pauses on Perceval who is lost in thought and absent from reality,[237] but then accelerates time by passing five years in a couple of verses. During this absence, Perceval performs many chivalric feats and sends prisoners to Arthur's court, but he forgets his mother and Gornemant's spiritual advice to go to church and worship God. Time weighs heavily and the lack of detail surrounding the five-year events conveys the void that Perceval feels when he realizes his unmindfulness.

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[235] As the story transitions between characters, Rick Altman describes the hyperbolic modulations that the narrator uses to abruptly change the narrative focus from character to character. He gives the transition from Gauvain to Perceval as an example, and notes the more common use in the prose *Queste del Saint Graal* (243-245).

[236] "le temps apparaît dans cette œuvre comme affecté d'une étrange élasticité: temps qui s'étire et se sublime dans l'extase de Perceval face aux trois gouttes de sang, temps qui, à l'inverse, se contracte et pèse lourd comme une pierre dans le raccourci vertigineux de ces cinq ans de vaines entreprises et d'oubli de Dieu qui ouvre l'épisode des pénitents" (104).

[237] The trance, however, does have a temporal marker, as Fritz explains that "Chrétien intègre dans cet épisode du sang sur la neige la dimension temporelle à l'intérieur même de cet arrachement au temps, puisque le symbole, à la différence du cheveu d'or immarcescible de la Reine, est condamné à fonder au soleil" (30). Contrary to literally being knocked out of a trance like Lancelot, the sun and time of day breaks Perceval's thoughts and brings him back to reality.

As he meets a group of knights and ladies coming from a hermitage on Good Friday, Perceval is wearing armor and does not understand the significance of the day. When they explain that God became man and that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world (v. 6197-6201), Perceval cries and desires to repent. He removes his armor, kneels before the hermit, and confesses, saying that he has not known who he is or what he has been doing, "Sire, fait il, bien a .V. anz / Que je ne soi ou je me fui, / Ne Deu n'amai ne Deu ne crui, / N'onques puis ne fis se mal non " (v. 6290-6293). These five years of absence present themselves as a form of syncope, as Perceval seemingly awakens to realize his unmindfulness that has been much more than a simple unmindfulness of social etiquette like his previous love trance.

When the hermit asks why Perceval has forgotten God, Perceval reveals that he did not ask questions when he saw the bleeding lance and the grail. Discovering his identity, the hermit reiterates that Perceval's sin comes from causing his mother to faint and die of despair.

> Uns pechiez don tu ne sez mot,
> Ce fu li diels que ta mere ot
> De toi, quant tu parties de li,
> Que pasmee a terre chaï
> Au chief del pont devant la porte,
> Et de ce duel fu ele morte.
> Por le pechié que tu en as
> T'avint que tu ne demandas
> De la Lance ne do Graal,[238]

[238] As Richard Barber explains, when the grail first appears in the *Conte du Graal*, it is not religious or symbolic, but illustrates how Perceval takes Gornemant's advice too literally and did not ask questions (8). Barber shows that the narrator first uses "grail" with a lowercase g, and "Grail" with an uppercase appears later (8). It is interesting to note that the first time that *Graal* is used is after the hideous lady appears at Arthur's court and

Si t'an sunt avenu maint mal,

Ne n'eüsse[s] pas tant duré

S'ele ne t'eüst commandé

A Dalmedeu, ce saiches tu. (v. 6319-6331).

The image of the fainted mother returns for the fourth time, but Perceval will now understand the complete significance. The previous reminder led Perceval to find information about the grail, but this quest was strictly one to right a wrong since the hideous lady reproached him for having missed the opportunity to heal the Fisher King. Rupert Pickens explains that this quest comes from a worldly perspective, with knights searching to show prowess, and that there is a "mutual incompatibility" between the knightly quest of Arthur's kingdom and the spiritual quest of the Grail kingdom that the court is not able to understand (*Welsh Knight* 77-79). Sin does not stop Perceval from functioning as a knight and participating in the "game of courtly love, manifest in the love trance …" (Pickens, *Welsh Knight* 125), but it does keep him silent before the grail and unable to understand its significance. From a worldly perspective, Perceval knows that he missed an opportunity to help and should not have kept silent, but the hermit explains that Perceval is guilty of sin and that his mother's prayer to God for protection is what has guarded him for the past five years. Perceval has a metaphorical awakening from his trance,[239] and gains a spiritual perspective. He repents and receives his final lessons,[240] which includes believing in God, loving

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reproaches Perceval's silence. Perceval then leaves to find more information (v. 4665). The narrator again uses *graal* when Perceval tells the hermit what he saw at the castle (v. 6305), but then the hermit uses *Graal* (v. 6327) when he tells Perceval he could not speak because of his sin. The lowercase *graal* seems to denote what Perceval sees, and shows a misunderstanding of its significance. The use of the term *Graal* shows a greater spiritual understanding.

[239] Using Maddox's expression that we have examined throughout the chapter to explain awakenings that can cause "significant transformations or crystallizations of identity" (41).

[240] The hermit also tells him to honor good men and women, rise before priests, help young ladies in need, especially widows and orphans as a perfect act of charity, which alludes to James 1:27.

God, and worshipping God (v. 6385). He now understands the spiritual meaning of *caritas*, that God is love, that Chrétien alludes to in the prologue.

While it is uncertain if Perceval continues his quest for the grail, it is clear that syncope becomes a marker for Perceval's transformation and separates the worldly and spiritual knighthoods. As Rupert Pickens shows, family ties, especially through the mother, link the Forest, Grail Castle, and the hermitage since both the Fisher King and the hermit are Perceval's uncles (*Welsh Knight* 49-51, v. 6341-6345). Chrétien uses the mother to unite episodes, and reminders at both the castle and the hermitage of her faint emphasize her role. Additionally, instances of syncope are also intertwined and show Perceval's progression from beginning to end, as it is Perceval's sin of causing his mother to faint and die of despair that causes his silence before the grail. This silence then hinders his ability to find the grail and leads to a five-year trance-like state of syncope. Finally, instances of trance-like syncope present different elements of his character. Perceval achieves his goal of becoming a knight, and his love trance shows him to be a courtly knight mesmerized by his lady. However, he forgets spiritual values and wanders for five years in a trance-like state, until he removes his armor at the hermitage and repents (v. 6264-6267).[241] Trance-like states of syncope make it possible for Chrétien to highlight two different kinds of chivalry: the worldly and the spiritual. The romance ends with an emphasis on the spiritual, and noting these two types of chivalry, Harry Williams states that the *Conte du Graal* is "a palinode to the Lancelot story" (151).[242]

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[241] Rupert Pickens explains that Perceval "…is made to realize a reconciliation with the world of spiritual values which, earlier, he has had to reject; and this reconciliation, accomplished at the Hermitage, involves rejection of his Arthurian identity (signified, in part, by the removal of his armor)…" (*Welsh Knight* 140).

[242] William's interpretation coincides with C.S. Lewis's statement of the irremediable rift between courtliness and the Christian religion (40-41). Williams also discusses the eschatological nature of the text. Maddox also shows that the basic structure of the romance follows the narrative form of death and rebirth, as seen in each awakening (44-47).

Since the *Conte du Graal* is unfinished, the romance leaves many questions unanswered, and launched many continuations. As we will see, the influence of Chrétien's works on the *Lancelot en prose* is evident. In addition to the grail quest, another interesting motif that continues is the absence of Arthur. Arthur is found sleeping in the *Chevalier au Lion* and the *Conte du Graal*, but more striking examples of trances occur in this last romance, as his entrance into the story begins with him in a trance-like state when Perceval arrives to become a knight. Perceval is warned that he will find the king both joyful and sad, and he sees Arthur both pensive and quiet, "Et li rois Artus est assis / Au chief d'une table pansies" (v. 865-866). The other knights, however, are celebrating their victory and wondering what is wrong with the king, "'Qu'a li rois, qu'est pensis et muz?'" (v. 869). Repeating twice that Arthur is lost in thought, the narrator says that Perceval drops his hat on the table to awaken the king. Arthur explains that he is upset because the *Chevalier Vermeil* spilled wine from the king's cup on the queen, but Perceval's only concern is to become a knight. However, the king's trance-like state causes Perceval to wonder how Arthur is the king who makes knights if he cannot even speak, "'… Qant on parole n'en puet traire, / Comant porroit chevalier faire?'" (v. 887-888).

This first instance introduces Arthur's character and diminishes his reputation in the eyes of Perceval, while the second instance concludes the *Conte du Graal* and leaves Arthur in an unconsciousness state. As a messenger arrives at Arthur's court in order to prepare for Gauvain's duel with Guiromelant, he is also warned of the king's mood of sadness and anger. When Arthur sees the messenger but not his nephew, he becomes pensive and faints, causing everyone to run over to pick him up.

> Li rois fu mornes et pansies
>
> Qant il vit sa grant baronie

Et de son nevo n'i vit mie,

Si s'et pasmez de grant destrece.

Au relever fu sanz parece

Cil qui premiers i pot venir,

Que tuit lo corrent sostenir (v. 9052-9058).

Arthur's loss of consciousness creates a dramatic spectacle, and the romance concludes with the lady Lore running to tell the queen what has happened. This instance of fainting creates unending suspense as the weaker and absent Arthur is left unconscious and the narration ends. Just as syncope can signify an outer manifestation of sin, it can also represent a loss of power, as we will see with Arthur in the *Lancelot en prose*.

Conclusion

In Chrétien de Troyes's romances, instances of syncope surround the key themes from the married couple's reconciliation in *Erec et Enide*, the courtly love deception of Cligès and Fénice in *Cligès*, Yvain's broken oath in the *Chevalier au Lion*, Lancelot's courtly love in the *Chevalier de la Charrette*, and Perceval's spiritual awakening in the *Conte du Graal*. While both fainting and trances abound, the latter becomes the dominant form of syncope as we move from *Erec et Enide* to the *Conte du Graal*. As Cormier explains that Chrétien's romances, especially *Erec*, still contain "l'héritage des oeuvres d'inspiration antique" ("Remarques" 86), the uses of syncope also resemble the epics in knight's injuries or the *romans d'antiquité* in Enide's devotion. As the influence of courtly love becomes more prominent with characters like Yvain and Lancelot struggling to obey their ladies, trances portray internal states. Although this shift is notable, this is not to say that there is a clear separation from the earlier texts to the courtly

romances. Differences are evident, but similarities still remain, such as the motif of the mourning mother from *Alexis*, epic battle injuries and distress, and Ovidian influences on lovesickness.

In addition to the paradigm of syncope enlarging to include courtly love trances, syncope extends to signify broken oaths or sin. Using the motif of appearances versus reality, fainting is also a useful tool to parody mourning at death scenes since the character is not actually dead as in *Erec et Enide, Cligès,* and the *Charrette*. Other parodies include mocking courtly discretion in love in *Cligès* in both Soredamor and Fénice who unnecessarily try to hide their emotions, or ridiculing the knightly prowess of Lancelot who awkwardly fights backwards in the *Charrette*.

While the courtly love trances all occur in men, Chrétien uses syncope in both male and female characters. Contrary to the *Roman de Thèbes* in which a group of women lose consciousness in a situation where the reader would anticipate syncope from men, both men and women faint in expected situations following the paradigm that we have examined. Lunette's remark to Laudine in *Yvain* that a woman of her rank should not continually lose consciousness is the only mention of the appropriateness of fainting. Furthermore, the expressions that Chrétien uses to describe fainting remain traditional with "pasmer" as the primary verb. Following the epic model, *Erec et Enide* mentions three times that a character faints off of his horse, while a form of "choir pasmer," first seen in *Alexis*, occurs ten times throughout the five romances. The greatest variation in expression occurs to describe trances. As seen in *Erec et Enide,* the expression "soi meïsmes oblie" (v. 3759) depicts Eric's trance as he does not notice the approaching knights, but the same wording, "lui meïsmes en oblie" (v. 715) then illustrates Lancelot's courtly trance in the *Charrette*. One describes an unmindfulness in duty and models the epic texts, but the other expresses love. Sutherland explains that courtly language often takes a term with a certain meaning in the feudal context and then restricts the term to have "an even

more specialized meaning in the context of the convention of courtly love" (169). Other terms that illustrate a trance-like loss of consciousness include "pensis," "pensé," and "esbahie" in *Cligès*, "trespensé," "s'oublia," "pourpens," and "forsenne" in *Yvain*, "pansies," "esgarde," and "ne se torna ne ne se mut," in the *Chevalier de la Charrette*, and "et panse tant que toz s'oblie," "que je ne soi ou je me fui," and "pensis et muz" in the *Conte du Graal*. As this study transitions to the *Lancelot en prose* in the final chapter, characters will continue to be lost in thought, most notably with Lancelot's love trances and Arthur's distress and absence. The extensive Arthurian prose romances adapt many of the expressions, themes and functions of syncope that Chrétien develops, and serve as an interesting point of comparison.

Chapter Four: The Rise and Fall of Lancelot in the *Lancelot en prose*

In this final chapter on syncope in Old French literature of the High Middle Ages, my analysis turns to the Arthurian prose romances of the thirteenth century. The extensive *Vulgate Cycle*[243] covers the *Estoire del Saint Grail, Estoire de Merlin, Lancelot propre, Queste del Saint Graal*, and *la Mort le roi Artu*. It is understood that the central *Lancelot propre* was written first, followed by the *Queste*, *Mort Artu*, and finally the two *Estoires* (Hult, *Mort* 13), which were completed later and expanded upon Robert de Boron's *Estoire dou Graal* and *Merlin* (Micha, *Essais* 12). Critics use the term *Lancelot en prose* to describe the *Lancelot propre, Queste, and Mort Artu,* and this group of romances was written between 1225-1230.[244] Furthermore, Paulin Paris separated the *Lancelot propre* into three sections, the *Galehaut,* which ends with the death of Galehaut, the *Charrette ou Méléagant et Suites*, and the *Agravain* (Micha 86). Elspeth Kennedy also discusses the differences between the cyclic and non-cyclic versions of the *Lancelot propre* that share the same text until Lancelot's journey to Sorelois with Galehaut and the False Guinevere episode (*Lancelot* 253). She shows that while the non-cyclic version has a cohesiveness of its own with repeating themes and structures, the cyclic version better prepares the reader for the "destructive aspects" of Lancelot and Guinevere's love and the different chivalry presented in the *Graal* (313).[245]

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[243] I use the term *Vulgate Cycle* to refer to the work in its entirety with *L'Estoire, Merlin, le Lancelot propre, la Queste del Saint Graal,* and *la Mort le roi Artu*. For Hult, the title *Lancelot-Graal* includes *L'Estoire del Saint Graal, L'Estoire de Merlin,* le *Lancelot propre,* la *Queste del Saint Graal,* et la *Mort le roi Artu* (*Mort* 13), while Micha uses the *Lancelot-Graal* to include everything but *Merlin* and *L'Estoire* (12).

[244] Discrepancies in the date exist, as according to Micha, the *Lancelot en prose* dates between 1225-1230 (*Essais* 12), and according to Hult, the *Lancelot en prose* dates from 1215-1230, with the *Merlin* and *Estoire* being added between 1230-1235 (*Mort* 13).

[245] In chapter ten of her study, Kennedy analyzes the differences and similarities between the non-cyclic and cyclic versions, and shows the cyclic version makes reference to Galaad's quest for the grail and emphasizes the sins of Arthur, Lancelot and Guinevere (*Lancelot* 258). The cyclic version introduces "doubts concerning the morality of Lancelot and Guinevere's love" (78). Most notably, Arthur falls in love with the false Guinevere in the non-cyclic version due to a potion, but is duped and falls in love without a potion in the cyclic version (259-260). Depending on

This chapter focuses on the *Lancelot en prose*, and we will begin by examining the *Galehaut* section of the *Lancelot propre,* more specifically the two volumes of the non-cyclic version titled the *Lancelot du Lac*.[246] This text presents the beginning of Lancelot's story and his growth as a knight, featuring the primary themes of identity and love.[247] Since my study does not discuss the entire *Lancelot propre*, the non-cyclic version of *Lancelot du Lac* allows an examination of the key uses of syncope and an understanding of the "inner coherence" of the non-cyclic prose that Kennedy presents (*Lancelot* 312). Next, the *Queste del Saint Graal* follows the spiritual search for God and Lancelot's repentance. It illustrates the consequences of Lancelot's love and the problem of sin in the spiritual quest, as well as the incompatibility of courtly love and the Christian religion, first visible in Chrétien's *Chevalier de la Charrette* and *Conte du Graal*. Finally *la Mort le roi Artu* depicts Lancelot returning to sin and Arthur's crumbling kingdom.

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the views of the unity of the work, she shows that the non-cyclic version is either a section cut off from the *Cycle*, or that the cyclic version is an elaboration "designed to lead into a *Lancelot-Grail* cycle," but she believes the latter to be true. (271-273). For more, see Micha and Lot's works that comment extensively on the differences between the cyclic and non-cyclic versions. Another major discussion concerning the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle* revolves around the unity of the cycle as well as the unity of author. Alexandre Micha highlights the ideas of critics, such as Lot who says that the cycle was written by one author, or Pauphilet who states that the *Estoire* came after the *Queste* and that the different sections are not a random compilation by copyists but are carefully assembled into one cycle. Pauphilet also agrees with theory of the unity of author (Micha 297-298). Furthermore, Bruce states that there are several authors, especially one for each section of *Lancelot propre*, Lot-Borodine maintains the unity of the work, and J. Neale Carman explains that the cycle has multiple authors and an autobiographical aspect. Frappier explains that the *Lancelot, Queste,* and *Mort Artu* had an architect overseeing the cycle with different authors working towards a unity of the work (Frappier, *Mort* x), and that the *Estoire* was written later (Micha 298-300, 305). Micha further notes contradictions between the texts, but concludes that the work is unified. Moreover, he shows that there are links and inter-textual reminders woven between the works, including the insistence on key values, such as moderation versus lust, a religious inspiration, characterization defined by characters' actions, and constants such as *entrelacement,* reminders, flashbacks, and similarities in syntax. Micha leans toward the theory of the unity of author, even though he admits that a definite and absolute conclusion is not possible (302-306). For more, see chapter thirteen of Micha's *Essais*.

[246] The first two volumes of *Lancelot du Lac* contain the *Galehaut* section of the *Lancelot propre*, and I will refer to volume one and two of *Lancelot du Lac* 1 or 2.

[247] For an in-depth analysis of both of these themes, see Kennedy's *Lancelot and the Grail: a Study of the* Prose Lancelot.

Lancelot du Lac

While syncope functions in similar ways to those found in hagiography, the epics, *romans d'antiquité*, and courtly romances, *Lancelot du Lac* further develops the paradigm of fainting that occurs in myriad situations to express feelings such as pain, despair, lovesickness, fear, joy, shame, indecision, guilt, and rejection. Although occurring in thirty different characters, it is most notably the instances when the main characters faint that show the development of the paradigm. In the *Lancelot du Lac* alone, syncope abounds with forty-five instances of fainting, eighteen trance-like states, and seven other references to fainting, Moreover, similar to Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte du Graal* and *Chevalier de la Charrette*, trances become a common occurrence for Arthur and illustrate his regret and loss of power, while Lancelot's love-trances prove his fidelity to his lady.

Lancelot du Lac opens with the story of Lancelot's father, Ban de Benoïc, who dies from his sadness after losing his land and castle to the attacking Claudas. The *demoiselle du Lac* then arrives and throws Lancelot into the lake, causing his despairing mother, Helen, to join a convent. Ban's brother, King Bohort, also dies, leaving behind his wife, Evaine, and two sons, Lionel and Bohort, who are taken by Pharien, a vassal of Claudas, and a knight disinherited by King Bohort. The romance follows Claudas's search for the two boys and his struggle for power against Arthur, Arthur's increasing regret for not helping his vassal Ban, and most importantly, Lancelot's childhood and education as a knight. In the beginning, Lancelot is angry and impulsive, but soon becomes a *prud'homme* (1:157). When he travels to Arthur's kingdom to be knighted, he becomes known as the knight with white armor, and helps Arthur protect his land. At first no one takes the young Lancelot seriously in his knightly endeavors because he is inexperienced, but he gradually gains a reputation with many different names including *valet*,

chevalier blanc, chevalier errant, chevalier vermeil, chevalier de la litière, chevalier noir, and finally Lancelot. As he discovers who he is and desires to keep it a secret, the theme of identity becomes prominent. As a result of Lancelot's secrecy, Gauvain's main quest is to find Lancelot.

In contrast to Chrétien de Troyes's *Charrette*, the reader sees Lancelot's first meeting with Guinevere and watches their love develop, as Lancelot wants to be his lady and enters many love trances. In addition to the struggle with his impossible love, Lancelot's adventures include trying to heal an injured man by killing any knight that is his enemy, helping and being tested by the Lady of Norhaut, defeating the *Douleureuse Garde* with magical shields, liberating Yvain and Gauvain from prison, fighting the King of One Hundred Knights for Lady Norhaut, being imprisoned by Lady Malehaut, befriending Galehaut and saving Arthur's kingdom, having his identity known at Arthur's court, and finally being reconciled with Guinevere, albeit in secret.

The second volume of *Lancelot du Lac* continues the narration, but focuses on Lancelot's friendship with Galehaut and his love for Guinevere. At the end of the first volume, Lancelot leaves with Galehaut to return to Sorelois, and this is where the cyclic and non-cyclic versions of *Lancelot propre* diverge. This non-cyclic version continues the story with a group of Arthur's knights, including Gauvain, Yvain, Keu, Girflet, and Sagremor, leaving to search for Lancelot. On this quest, Gauvain meets Hector and helps his lady defeat her father's killer. Due to her love for Gauvain, Lady Roestoc then seeks Hector's help to find him again. Much of the narration covers the adventures of Hector and Lady Roestoc's search, while Gauvain searches for Lancelot, and discovers his brother Agravain. Finally, when Arthur seeks the help of all his knights to fight the invading Saxons and Irish, Lancelot and Galehaut return to fight while trying to keep their true identities a secret. Amidst the many battles, the love of Guinevere and Lancelot is critical to the text, and reveals many instances of syncope. Near the end of the story, Arthur is

taken prisoner, Lancelot goes mad in prison, and Guinevere is greatly distressed upon seeing her lover's folly. Liberated from prison, Lancelot regains strength from love, and frees Galehaut, Gauvain, and Arthur. Lancelot again goes to Galehaut's land, but quickly returns to save his lady when a fake Guinevere arrives at Arthur's court, and the text concludes with Galehaut's death, due to a false rumor that Lancelot has died.

Syncope functions in several ways in *Lancelot du Lac*, yet its role as a "device of characterization" ("Prosthesis" 29) is most apparent, and instances unveil Gauvain's past, Claudas's transformation, Arthur's declining role as king, and Lancelot's development as a knight and courtly lover. Beginning with Gauvain, fainting redirects the reader's attention to the important scenes of his strength and weakness as a knight, his broken relationship with Lady Roestoc, and his reunion with his brother. Similar to Gauvain's character in Chrétien de Troyes's romances, scenes of fainting unveil aspects of Gauvain's already established reputation. As Arthur's nephew, it is known that Gauvain is valiant, faithful, and critical to the court, yet injuries in battle gradually reduce his abilities. For example, as Arthur and Galehaut engage in battle near the end of the first volume of *Lancelot du Lac*, Gauvain fights valiantly but becomes severely injured and loses consciousness. The narrator emphasizes Gauvain's bodily weakness by saying that he faints without being touched, "il ne li pot onques mot dire, ainz chaï pasmez a terre sanz ce que nus ne l'adesoit" (1:802).[248] His faint causes extreme mourning, and doctors decide to hide the fact that Gauvain's ribs are broken and that they do not expect him to survive. More than depicting the gravity of an injury and showing Gauvain's importance to Arthur, Gauvain's loss of consciousness functions as a spectacle for the other characters who witness his collapse. As Lady Malehaut's knights see Gauvain faint in front of the tent and assume he is dead, "Quant messires Gauvains se fu pasmez devant sa tente, bien l'orent veü li chevaliers de

[248] All references to *Lancelot du Lac* 1 come from Mosès's edition based on the edition of Elspeth Kennedy.

Malohaut, si orent oï par derrierres que [l'en disoit que] morz estoit" (1:802), the narrator uses fainting to illustrate Gauvain's renown as a great knight and to connect the stories of Arthur and Lady Malehaut who is keeping Lancelot prisoner. As Lady Malehaut says that Gauvain's death would be a great distress for the entire world, ending all joy,[249] the hyperbolic statement equates the loss of Gauvain with the loss of Arthur's power.

Fears of Gauvain's death increase, and distress now causes him to lose consciousness. The Arthurian army's only hope for victory lies with Lancelot, who is in a trance-like state, mesmerized by Guinevere (1:807). When Gauvain mistakenly thinks that Galehaut defeats Lancelot, he faints three times in the amount of time that it would take to throw a small stone, "Et messires Guavains refit tel duel que il s'est trois foiz pasmez an moins d'ore que l'an n'alast lo giet d'une menue pierre" (1:834). Illustrated by the frequency of his fainting, Gauvain's weakened state intensifies, and the court must try to hide their emotions from Gauvain in order not to deepen his distress. Gauvain reproaches Arthur for having lost the great knight, Lancelot, and when knights try to prevent him from watching the battle, he states that he would rather die. As Gauvain faints several times, the other characters think that his wish has come true, "Si se pasmoit si menuement que chascuns qui lo voit quidoit bien que il morist maintenant" (1:846). Continuing throughout the *Lancelot en prose* until *la Mort le roi Artu*, characters frequently repeat that Gauvain is dying, and instances of fainting and subsequent reawakening delay the narration in order to emphasize Gauvain's importance, but also to show his declining state. Contrary to Roland or Vivien in the epic texts, Gauvain does not persevere and fight, but remains injured on the sidelines, only watching the battle. His loss of consciousness does not show

[249] "ce est granz dolors a tot lo monde, et au jor de sa mort devra bien estre tote joie remese"(1:804).

prowess, but the gradual decline of Arthur's kingdom, as his greatest knights do not participate in battle.[250]

At the beginning of the second volume of *Lancelot du Lac*, the narrator states that Gauvain and his companions continue their search for Lancelot in Galehaut's kingdom, and that Gauvain is completely healed (2:36).[251] He adds that Gauvain is strong and beautiful, but will never have the same strength as he had before.[252] The reader can therefore expect great adventures from Gauvain, but is aware of the weakness that becomes all the more apparent in the *Mort le roi Artu*. Gauvain shows his knightly prowess as he defeats many knights, such as the knight who killed the father of Hector's lady,[253] and the text frequently hints at his strength or weakness, and his reputation. For example, Grohadain, the dwarf uncle of Hector's lady, incessantly mocks Gauvain and calls him cowardly, but Gauvain's victory proves the narrator's statements that he is still able to fight (2: 38, 93, 117). Moreover, the importance that Gauvain gives to his reputation is evident when Lady Roestoc forgets to acknowledge him after the fight. She enlists the help of Hector, his lady, and Grohadain to search for him, but Gauvain's behavior shows his pride. Kennedy explains that Lady Roestoc "fails to recognize her champion's prowess

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250 Emphasizing the distress that prevents him from participating in battle, Gauvain regains his strength when he realizes that Lancelot is a friend of Galehaut instead of a prisoner. He tells Galehaut that he was very sick, but his joy upon hearing about the friendship between the two kingdoms healed him (1:852). Gauvain appears weak as characters avoid upsetting him and he cannot cope with the present reality.

251 All references to the second volume of *Lancelot du Lac* come from Marie-Luce Chênerie's edition, based on the edition of Elspeth Kennedy.

252 "et mout li fu sa force revenue et sa biautez. Et neporqant, onques puis ne fu an autresi grant vigor ne an santé com il vaoit devant esté, et si fist il puis maint biau cop d'espee et de lance" (2:38).

253 Syncope is often central to these examples of Gauvain's prowess as he unhorses and defeats other knights. For example, Gauvain fights and knocks a knight off his horse so violently that the knight's arm breaks in his shield causing him to faint and remain unconscious for a long period of time (2:204). Moreover, a knight that Gauvain injures when he must fight ten knights at the Castle of Sorelais loses consciousness and then awakens to see his blood all around him, causing him to beg Gauvain for mercy (2:470). The knight is comforted to know that such a great knight as Gauvain defeated him (472).

and after his victory neglects to reward it, only to fall in love when it is too late" (*Lancelot* 69). Gauvain intends to forget Lady Roestoc like she forget him, and the news causes her to faint from despair, "et qant la dame l'antant, si se pasme… Maintenant cort la reine et l'autre dame et damoiselles assez, si la traient an une chambre que totes les genz ne la veïssent" (*Lancelot du Lac* 2: 158). Lady Roestoc's reaction of despair gives finality to Gauvain's statement. As her ladies move her to another room so that she does not create a spectacle, the importance of courtly discretion, first visible in Chrétien de Troyes, is much more explicit.[254] As we will see, propriety is often a concern of characters in the *Lancelot du Lac*, and the narrator provides additional details of characters' perceptions. Once in private, Lady Roestoc tells the queen that she still loves Gauvain, yet Gauvain's rejection of her is firm and he repeatedly sends her prisoners as a reminder.

In another example, propriety, shocking news, and the spectacle of a fainting lady leads to more fainting, revealed identities, and continued quests. In this episode, Gauvain fights for a young lady seeking revenge against a former lover who took her possessions. Hearing rumors that Gauvain is losing the battle, the young lady sees his blood and faints, "Et qant ele voit lo sanc, si ne se pot an tenir an piez, ainz se pasme et chiet a terre" (*Lancelot* 2: 384). The narrator uses a hyperbolic modulation, in the terms of Rick Altman, to transition abruptly to Lancelot's cousin and squire, Lionel, and leaves the lady in her unconscious state.[255] Yet, by chance, says the narrator, Lionel arrives at the same duel and tries to watch the combat. The young lady's faint becomes an important and comical means of linking the two stories together, as she regains

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[254] Another example of private mourning occurs when Hector leaves on the quest to find Gauvain, and Hector's lady shows such extreme mourning that Lady Malehaut locks her up in her room so that everyone does not see her outward display of emotions (2:160-162).

[255] "Or si se destorne li contes une piece de la bataille por conter une avanture de Lyonel, lo cosin Lancelot, qui a la cort s'an aloit" (2:384).

consciousness and Lionel bumps into the men who are carrying her away from the duel, and the source of her distress. Being too preoccupied with the combat, Lionel does not hear the men warn him to move,[256] and the knights accuse Lionel of lacking manners. The lady must then stop Lionel from retaliating, since a squire must not attack a knight (2:384). The scene emphasizes the appropriate behavior of the knights carrying the fainting lady away, but also Lionel's unmindfulness of his conduct.

When Lionel continues to insult them and mentions the land of Galehaut, Gauvain overhears the argument and is filled with joy thinking about his quest for Lancelot. Syncope now connects Lionel and Gauvain's stories, as the young lady faints a second time when Lionel says that he is shocked to learn that Gauvain is the knight fighting because he is not winning quickly, "Et qant la damoiselle l'ot, si rechiet pamee" (386). The narrator highlights that Gauvain's reputation precedes him when Lionel says that Gauvain's abilities do not match those from the battle of Loverzerp where he previously saw Gauvain fight. While emphasizing Gauvain's coveted reputation and his declining strength, the reproach causes Gauvain to refocus and win the duel. In *Lancelot du Lac*, Lancelot is building his reputation as a knight, much like Perceval in Chrétien's *Conte du Graal*, but Gauvain is an established, great knight with a past. As seen in Lionel's statement, Elspeth Kennedy explains that the "unexplained references to earlier adventures which are not told in this romance serve to give him a past" (*Lancelot* 200).

In the duel, Lionel also mentions that Gauvain appears to be thinking about something else, "Mais il voit bien qu'il muse et panes a que que soit, et si ne set a coi" (2:386), and a final instance of fainting reveals the source of his thoughts. When a young lady arrives criticizing Lionel, she forces him to reveal that he belongs to Lancelot, and Lionel almost faints, "Et qant il l'a dit, si a tel dolor que par un po qu'il ne se pasme, et fait si grant duel que trop" (390). Distress

[256] "Et il antandi tant a regarder que il ne sot que cil li dist" (2:384).

at revealing Lancelot's name, and the shock of realizing the lady is his former lover, cause his near loss of consciousness, yet the spectacle reveals his identity to the young lady, and she tells Gauvain that Lionel will help him on his quest for Lancelot. Repeated instances of fainting lead to revealed identities, as the lady faints and meets Lionel, Lionel sees Gauvain and the lady faints, then Gauvain meets Lionel and Lionel faints. These identities then propel Gauvain's quest as he wins the duel, and Lionel will later intervene and help Gauvain meet Lancelot (2:496). Elspeth Kennedy comments on the "pattern of interlace" that connects even small adventures to Lancelot, and says that "[Gauvain's] frequent journeys are part of the tale of Lancelot because it is Lancelot whom he is seeking" (*Lancelot* 200). The duel to help the young lady then serves the purpose of connecting Gauvain to Lionel, and then Lancelot.

One additional example that links Gauvain to Lancelot occurs when a young lady convinces him to heal the injured Agravain. This episode uses the paradigm of fainting to illustrate diverse emotions, as well as unveiling further information about Gauvain's past and depicting his continued struggle with his reputation. Tricked into entering the castle,[257] Gauvain sees Agravain, who can no longer speak or move, has a broken left arm and right leg, and has such a terrible smell due to the injuries that they must keep his body covered (2:180). These dramatic and realistic details of the wounds, including the smell, make the image of the knight more vivid. The narrator again juxtaposes Gauvain's great reputation with doubts about his abilities, as the young lady says Gauvain is one of the two great knights for whom she has been

[257] On his continual quest for Lancelot, Gauvain, out of curiosity, follows a lady known as the *demoiselle à l'épée* who is searching for two of the best knights who ever lived. Gauvain fights so the lady will reveal the knights' names, and she eventually leads him to Agravain. Since Gauvain must fill a helmet with his blood in order to heal Agravain, he tries to fight and escape. He hits one knight so hard that he breaks his nose and causes him to faint from pain, thus illustrating his strength as the better knight (2:186). Agravain is pleased to see the prowess of Gauvain, but also sad to know that he may not be healed if Gauvain escapes (2:184).

searching to heal the knight, but Gauvain says he is not the best knight. Nevertheless, Gauvain accepts the challenge, and Agravain is healed when they rub blood on his arm and leg (2:188).

The motif of mistaken identities causes four different instances of fainting, as Mordred opens the window to let in more light, and laments when he sees Gauvain. Agravain's joy from being healed quickly turns to despair, and he faints when Mordred reveals that their brother Gauvain is dead, "et qant il oï ce, si a tel duel que il se pasme" (2:190). Originally thinking that Agravain faints from his wounds, the young lady discovers the family relationship, and says that Gauvain's wounds are not fatal. Agravain and Gauvain then reveal their identities and both faint from joy, "Et font tel joie et tel duel li uns de l'autre que il se pasment ansenble, mais messires Gauvains s'ocit, car assez ot et duel et joie" (2:192).[258] Once again equating Gauvain's fainting with death, the narrator says that Gauvain's emotions are so intense from the contrast of mourning and joy that he almost dies. Luke Demaitre notes that syncope often resulted from "sudden swings in the affections. Excited joy was the most dangerous, affecting the heart more immediately …" (236). He relates this idea to Galen who said that "in exultation, all the warmth escaped abruptly and the heart collapsed" (237). Joy is the cause of Agravain and Gauvain's shocking collapses, yet syncope functions in several ways in this scene due to injury, shock, despair, and joy. The narrator illustrates Gauvain's prowess by his ability to fight and cause the other knight to faint, and mixes realistic descriptions of injury with mystical healing. He also uses a dramatic instance of fainting to show Agravain's despair at losing his brother, and then uses a loss of consciousness to show the extreme shift of emotions from despair to extreme joy. Agravain's injury is a narrative prosthesis that propels the narration forward to his healing, and the reconciliation of brothers. In addition, the reader receives additional information about

[258] Interestingly, this is only the second time in this study's chosen texts that a character faints from joy.

Gauvain's past and family. This scene is connected with Gauvain's larger purpose in the text, as Lancelot is the other great knight for whom the *demoiselle* is searching, and Gauvain continues on his quest.

Throughout the narration following Gauvain in *Lancelot du Lac*, instances of fainting redirect the reader's attention to Gauvain's reputation, character traits, and family. The connection between Gauvain and fainting is not exclusive, however, as the narrator also uses fainting to develop the characterization of more minor knights in the story. For example, syncope shows Hector as a valiant, yet love-struck knight, while also unveiling one of his prior exploits and the important protection of a knight's oath.[259] At the beginning of Lancelot's story, the narrator presents the prideful and covetous knight Claudas. Fainting elucidates Claudas's evolving character as one who destroys King Ban's kingdom, and has a heart so strong and proud that he is indifferent to suffering, "et neporqant il n'estoit pas costumiers de grant duel faire, car mout estoit de fier cuer et de viguereus et si soffrans que nus ne prisoit mains par sanblant les mesaventures qui avenoient que il faisoit" (1: 216, 218). However, after the death of his son, he understands suffering as his heart weakens and he is unable to control his extreme despair, visible in his fainting. His behavior has changed so dramatically, and his collapses are so frequent that others fear that he will die (1:220, 224).[260] His deep distress presents itself

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[259] Hector is seen as a love-struck knight as he is in a trance-like state thinking about his lady, and almost runs over an injured knight and lady who assume that Hector is asleep (2:213). He then proves his prowess as he fights several knights and causes the nephew of Duke Canbenic to faint from his injuries (230). In another example, Hector meets a group of knights carrying a dead comrade, Matralis, and the knights realize that Hector is the one who killed him. Ladomas, who had promised Hector protection since he helped him defeat Guinas, stops the group from killing him. Yet when Ladomas realizes the dead knight is his brother he faints and the group again tries to kill Hector (321). Ladomas regains consciousness to again promise protection, albeit against his will. The obedient knights who try to kill Hector during Ladomas's unconsciousness illustrate that a fainted character truly seems absent from reality and lacks power.

[260] As discussed in chapter two, Hippocrates thought that frequent fainting without an external cause was a sign that the person would soon die (Domecq 25).

externally, and his loss of consciousness is an important element of the *planctus* as he awakens to lament.[261] Others assume he will die, but he is also surprised that his heart endures (1:224).

Claudas reawakens from his grief to fight the knights of Bénoïc including Pharien, Lionel, and Bohort, and he loses consciousness again due to blood loss from his wounds, "si s'est pasmez por lo sanc qu'il a perdu" (1:238). Fearing that he is dead, his men remove his helmet and pour cold water on him until he awakens, "lors saillent a lui si home, qui mout ont grant paor qu'il ne soit morz, si li ostent lo hiaume de la teste a grant besing, puis l'arosent d'eve froide tant qu'il est revenuz de pasmeison" (1:238). In Chrétien de Troyes's romances, characters try to awaken an unconscious character in various ways, such as the doctors who torture Fénice in *Cligès*, or Gauvain who prods a fainted knight with his sword in the *Conte du Graal*. Pouring cold water on Claudas adds to the means of awakening that will continue to develop in the scenes of Arthur's trances.

After reawakening, Claudas's intense suffering is now coupled with shame and anger because he faints in front of others (*Lancelot* 1: 238, 240). The narrator does not explicitly state why Claudas is ashamed of his behavior, yet according to Claudas, shame is worse than death (1:338, 340), and his constant fainting ruins the image he wishes to project as a strong ruler. Despite his shame, his fainting continues when two dogs appear at court that are assumed to be Lionel and Bohort. The dogs cause Claudas to remember his own son, and he loses consciousness into the arms of his men, "mout amgoisseus del suen fil don't il li remenbre, si se rest pasmez illuec entre lor braz" (1:240). Claudas is visibly and publically weak after the death of his son, and he is no longer indifferent to suffering. When peace is eventually established between Claudas and the kingdom of Gaunes because Claudas has compassion for a prisoner, he

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[261] "Il se pasme sovant et menu, car tenir ne s'en puet. Et qant il revient de pasmeison, si parole a guise d'ome quimout a grant dolor et angoisse a son cuer" (1:220).

earns the devotion and trust of the men (1:366). In the character of Claudas, syncope illustrates his important transformation from complete indifference, strength, and pride to a suffering man who learns the importance of having the trust of his men.

Claudas's actions frame the downfall of King Ban's kingdom, and as Kennedy explains, he has many parallels with Arthur, as Claudas's defects are later the same qualities that Arthur lacks when he loses the hearts of some of his knights (*Lancelot* 226-27).[262] Although a more minor character only mentioned in the beginning of the *Lancelot du Lac*, Claudas foreshadows the failure of Arthur and the beginning of Lancelot.

The characterization of Lancelot begins with his childhood, and the narrator uses the stories of others to enrich and elucidate Lancelot's traits. At the very beginning of *Lancelot du Lac*, the dramatic faints of King Ban and Queen Helen provide the needed details to understand his background. In this episode, Ban, his wife Helen, and their infant son Lancelot return from seeking help from Arthur, and Ban finds his castle and kingdom in flames. This sight immediately evokes intense suffering, as his earthly hope is destroyed, and he laments the future of his noble wife and son, who will live in poverty. His despair deepens, his heart tightens in his chest, and he faints. Furthermore, as a result of his fall from his horse, he almost breaks his neck, "totes ces choses recorde li rois et i met devant ses iauz, et li toiche au cuer si granz dolors que les lermes li sont estopees et li cuers serrez el vantre, et se pasme, si chiet de son palefroi a terre si durement que par un po que li cox ne li brise" (1:70). These vivid descriptions illustrate his resulting injuries, his fall from power, and his literal fall from the horse. Furthermore, the newer detail of his heart tightening in his chest depicts the effect of distress on the heart that results in a

[262] The eighth chapter of Elspeth Kennedy's book, *Lancelot and the Grail*, offers an interesting analysis of the similarities and differences between many characters, especially Arthur and Claudas.

loss of consciousness, and resembles that of a heart attack in the case of King Ban.[263] Bleeding profusely and unconscious for some time, Ban reawakens to confess his sins and praise God for his merciful grace, instead of lamenting his destiny (1:72). The scene changes from one of distress and worldly sorrow with no hope to one where King Ban accepts his death, prays for his family, and looks to an eternal home with God. Similar to the epics, King Ban's loss of consciousness allows a confessional space as he confesses his sins to God before his heart again tightens in his chest, his vision fades, and his heart beats so forcefully that his veins and heart break (1:72,74).

In a study on syncope, an analysis of manuscript illustrations enhances the reader's perception of fainting, and is especially applicable in this scene with King Ban. Since syncope requires interpretation of the causes of fainting and the resulting state of the character, manuscript images can affect the reader's reception. They not only add a visual element to the textual spectacle, but can also emphasize the ambiguous appearance of an unconscious, sleeping, or dead character. In the BNF manuscript 113, an illumination shows King Ban falling from his horse in front of his burning kingdom (*Gallica,* BNF 113 fol.154 v). This image depicts King Ban's faint before his death and emphasizes his emotional suffering. On the other hand, the Arsenal manuscript 3481 begins with a half-page illustration that narrates the upcoming events with four miniatures, including the burning kingdom, King Ban's death, Lancelot being thrown into the lake, and Helen joining the convent (*Gallica,* Arsenal 3481 fol. 3 r). A few pages later just before the fainting and death of King Ban, there is another illumination showing the collapsed king (*Gallica,* Arsenal 3481 fol. 6v). The two images are almost identical, and King Ban appears to be sleeping with his head resting on one arm. The major difference between the

[263] Fainting and sickness or weaknesses of the heart often required the same treatment. For example in the *Circa instans*, Platearius lists borage, senna, rose water, rosemary, for both illnesses.

images lies in the reactions of the other characters, which give the impression that one is more serious. In the single illumination, Queen Helen has one arm outstretched while the young man is grasping both hands in front of his chest (Arsenal 3481 fol. 6v). On the other hand, the introductory miniature shows Queen Helen with both arms reaching for her husband and the young man with both arms raised to the sky (Arsenal 3481 fol. 3 r). Moreover, Queen Helen's different responses could represent her great emotional stress as well as her own fainting at her husband's death. Many manuscript illustrations depicting scenes of great distress and fainting show characters with their hands to their faces, or outstretched as in the BNF 113, thus representing despair and fainting in similar ways.

These images in Arsenal 3481 anticipate the events to come, but neither is completely accurate. In the text, King Ban faints, falls from his horse, prays, and dies alone. At his death, his hands are crossed on his chest with his head turned east (*Gallica*, Arsenal 3481 fol. 7r). The images do not illustrate every detail, but they condition an emotional response in the reader. In *Manuscripts and their Makers*, Rouse notes that popular illuminators such as the *Fauvel* master, who illustrated the Arsenal 3481, were not known for their accurate representations of texts. They often had a minimal understanding of the texts, and "the illuminators' visual interpretations and misinterpretations of the rubrics affected the readers' reception of the text" (259). Just as fainting causes the reader to question what happened, these images are also vague and are left to the interpretation of the reader since the image alone could be one of distress, sleep, fainting, or death. Despite their ambiguity, illuminations that specifically highlight episodes of fainting in manuscripts with relatively few illustrations emphasize the narrative importance of these scenes to the text as a whole. Additionally, images of fainting in different manuscripts further elucidate the visual paradigm of fainting, whether it be an interpretation or misinterpretation of the

illuminator, a desired emotional response, or the actual cultural perception of fainting as a confusing state resembling sleep or death.

In the *Lancelot du Lac*, the dramatic illustration of grief continues as the despairing Queen Helen suffers sympathetically, and she faints several times in quick succession. Noticing Ban's horse fleeing and hearing the squire yelling, Helen sees her dead husband and faints, "et quant el voit son seignor mort, si se pasme desus lo cors" (1:74). Following the model of the *planctus*, the sight of the deceased provokes a loss of consciousness and extreme mourning as she pulls out her hair, rips her clothing, scratches her face, feels her heart tighten in her chest, continues to faint and remain fainted, and then awakens to lament, "et la parole li faut por lou grant duel dont li cuers li est serrez, si se pasme sovant et longuement, et au revenir de pasmoisons se plaint et gramente" (1:74). She realizes that she left Lancelot by the horses, but the fear of finding him dead causes her to lose consciousness again before reaching him, "mais tant la destraint la granz paors que ele a qu'il ne soit morz, qu'ele chiet pasmee a terre ainz qu'ele soit venue a l'avaler del tertre jus" (74). The expression "chiet pasmee" emphasizes the motif of the mourning mother,[264] and Helen reawakens to a reality that causes her to faint again when she arrives just as the *demoiselle du Lac* throws her son into the water, "quant la reine vit son fil dedanz lo lac, si se pasme" (1:76). King Ban regains consciousness in time to prepare for his death, but Helen's deep distress does not lead to a similar end. She joins the convent, faints again, "et cele se pasme tantost" and awakens to proclaim that she is the Queen of Great Suffering (1:78). Furthermore, highlighting the importance of syncope as a sign of Helen's distress, the narrator adds that the tale in the beginning was called by the same name. Although a relatively small scene in the story, these multiple instances of fainting highlight the importance

[264] The expression "choir pasmer" is not exclusively or always used with the motif of the mourning mother, but commonly reoccurs and shows similarities to the first use of the verb "pasmer" in the *Vie de saint Alexis*.

of this episode to the text as a whole, and frame Lancelot's mysterious story with the *demoiselle du Lac*, since Lancelot's identity is kept a secret to him and others. Furthermore, King Ban's death connects Lancelot to Arthur, as the king is overcome with guilt for not helping his vassal.

As we observed in Chrétien de Troyes's *Chevalier au Lion* and *Conte du Graal*, most notably at the very end of the tale, Arthur's character is commonly in a trance-like state. This behavior continues in *Lancelot du Lac*, and Elspeth Kennedy discusses the importance of trances in her article, "Royal Broodings and Lovers' Trances." She explains, "the royal broodings have a greater resonance, not only because the motif is traditional in medieval literature, but also because the particular versions to be found in the *Prose Lancelot* echo episodes in a romance which would have been well known to the early thirteenth-century readers, Chrétien's *Conte del Graal* and its *Continuations*" (310). Kennedy's work on Arthur's broodings and Lancelot's trances enriches and supports this study, as she shows the significance of the motif. As we have seen and will analyze further in this chapter, trances are not an isolated motif, but a part of the bigger picture of fainting in literature. From the very beginning of *Lancelot du Lac*, the loss of King Ban's kingdom is a notable cause of Arthur's syncope and absence from the court, and an analysis of Arthur's trances clarifies the reasons for his decline, visible in the *Mort le roi Artu.* In addition to illustrating his own gradual loss of power, the trances enlarge the paradigm of syncope by focusing on details of how other characters awaken Arthur and try to discover the source of his thoughts.

In the *Lancelot du Lac*, three of Arthur's trances occur at a dinner party, and one as his army tries to attack the *Douleureuse Garde*. Beginning with the latter instance, syncope causes Arthur to appear weak and indecisive because he is unable to find a means of entering the

castle.[265] He becomes upset, sits down next to a fountain, and enters a trance-like reverie for three hours, from the *heure de prime* to the *heure de tierce*, "Lors s'est assis sor lo ru d'une fontaine et commança a penser mout durement tant que tierce commence a passer" (*Lancelot* 1:558). Arthur's trance-like state represents a departure from reality. His men decide to ask Guinevere what they should do since Arthur is too absorbed in his thoughts to function as king. Although not wanting to act without the king's order, Guinevere takes charge and leads the knights to the door when it will open at *tierce*. However, Lancelot becomes so lost in thought after seeing his lady that he too enters a trance, causing the door to slam in her face, "Mais il est tant esbahiz de la reine qu'i[l] s'an oblie toz, ne a rien n'entatn fors a li veoir." (1:560). While Arthur is thinking hard, "penser mout durement", Lancelot is "esbhaiz," and he forgets himself "s'an oblie toz," illustrating his unmindfulness of his duty, as the door slams in his lady's face.[266]

Lancelot's trance now awakens Arthur as he hears the slamming door, "si ot gité un si grant brait que li rois en ot laissié son pensé" (1:560) and sends Keu to see what has happened. Lancelot, not hearing Keu's insults, must be shaken out of his trance by the young lady who originally led him to the castle. The adventure continues when Lancelot commands that the door remain open, and Arthur and his knights enter, but these trances delay the action as Arthur cannot act, and Lancelot cannot open the door. While Lancelot appears as the love-struck courtly knight, Arthur seems indecisive, as he mopes when he has no plan to enter the castle. On a narrative level, Arthur's trance removes him from the story and allows Lancelot and Guinevere to be together. Lancelot's trance then brings Arthur back into the story.

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[265] Thinking Lancelot, the *chevalier blanc*, is dead after seeing his name in the *Cimitière de Merveilles*, Arthur does not realize that Lancelot has conquered Brandis, the master of the *Douleureuse Garde*, and is the one who must let them enter.

[266] The unmindfulness associated with trances again refers to Sutherland's analysis of the verb "s'oblidar" (169).

Arthur's three other trances also connect him to Lancelot, first as he thinks about his guilt of not helping King Ban. Secondly, he is upset that he does not have the greatest knight, Lancelot, at his court, and lastly, he is angry with his knights for not having found Lancelot already. Each instance is similar in that it shows Arthur's unmindfulness, the comic ways he is disturbed in his trances, and the curiosity of the other guests who desire to know the subject of his thoughts. At the first banquet celebrating Banin's win at the tournament, Arthur discovers that Banin is the godson of Ban and immediately becomes lost in thought, with tears running down his face onto the table, "Et lors recommence a penser trop durement. A ceste chose pansa li rois une grant piece et an tel maniere [que les lermes li chaoient contreval lou vis et corroient desus la table ou il s'estoit apoiez" (1:386). When Arthur does not respond as Gauvain asks him to forget his thoughts,[267] Keu decides to sound a horn so loudly that the room trembles.[268] This comic and dramatic method is effective, and Gauvain must then explain Arthur's distracted behavior. Further revealing perceptions of this instance of syncope, Gauvain says that ignoring the guests and crying would be inappropriate for a child, but is especially unbecoming of a man who is supposed to be one of the wisest of the time, "ce seroit assez laide chose a un anfant, enteimes que a os cui l'an tient a un des plus sages homes qui ores soit" (1:388). Gauvain reveals the courtliness of the lover's trance in Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte du Graal*, but now expresses the inappropriate behavior of a king in the court's eye, and Arthur's unawareness of his surroundings causes him to be "open to criticism for neglecting his social obligations" (Kennedy, "Broodings" 303). Similar to Adraste, who disagrees with Polynice's mourning in the *Roman de*

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267 "Et messires Gauvains li conmence a dire bassetement qu'il laissast son pansé atant," (1:386). Gauvain is afraid that Arthur will be upset if they awaken him, but Keu says that Arthur would only be upset if his thoughts are good, which they obviously are not.

268 "si lo sone si durement que tote la sale en tranble, c'est avis, et toes les chanbres la reine. Li rois tressaut por lo son del cor qu'il ot oï, si demanda a monseignor Gauvain, qu'il vit ester devant lui, que ce estoit" (1:386).

Thèbes because battle is the place for action, Gauvain also explains the inappropriateness of a trance, as not all moments are suitable for deep thinking (1:388).[269]

The instance at the second banquet is less dramatic, as Gauvain is easily able to pull Arthur from his thoughts, yet it shows syncope's role as a narrative prosthesis that propels the knights to action. The scene opens with Gauvain's healing after being wounded in battle, but instead of expressing joy, Arthur is again in a trance-like state at the table, "Et qant il ot une piece mengié, si comança a penser mout durement; et bien paroit a son penser que ses cuers n'estoit mie a ese" (1:778).[270] The narrator again uses the expression "commencer a penser durement" [271] to explain Arthur's state, and the verb "penser" obviously denotes a mental state beyond simple thinking, as others criticize Arthur's behavior and as he needs to be awakened. Highlighting the use of the verb, Sutherland explains that texts often rely on a "few terms which will denote or indicate the frame of mind or psychological state" and that the common terms are "*cossirar (consirar), pessar (pensar)*" (170).[272] These verbs then change to indicate deep

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269 While Arthur admits that he was wrong to be lost in thought in front of his barons, he justifies his trance by saying that he was reminded of his fault against his vassal Ban. Recognizing the wisdom of Gauvain's advice, Arthur wipes his eyes, tries to act appropriately, and asks Banin after dinner if he has received news about Helen or Lancelot (1:388).

270 Just before this trance, Galehaut's men arrive to suggest a truce. In another reference to Arthur's decline of power, Galehaut says that he wants a truce in order to give Arthur the chance to prepare a fair fight; Arthur is supposed to be the strongest king in the world but has defended himself so poorly (1:768). However, Arthur is only concerned with the fact that Galehaut claims to have the best knight at his court.

271 Et lors recommence a penser trop durement (1:386)/ commança a penser mout durement (1:558)/ si comança a penser mout durement (1:778).

272 Her detailed analysis using examples from lyric poetry shows the evolution of these verbs and their derivatives. *Cossirar* can indicate a deep preoccupation with a thought either with emotions or worries, and becomes essential to describe love longing in courtly lyric (172-176). She adds that "*pessar* and its derivatives show almost identical meanings with those of the *cossirar* group in Old Provençal" (178), and that as the "Provençal lyric began to be imitated in the north … *pessar* found an easy equivalent in *penser* …" (184). "The *penser* group is then left to carry a considerable semantic burden, being the common term for any kind of thought or mental activity besides having, in courtly language, the same special values and overtones as both *cossirar* and *pessar*" (186). Sutherland gives examples of Chrétien de Troyes's use of *penser* in the Lancelot tales to describe love meditation (188-189), and this also becomes evident in the *Lancelot en prose* in Lancelot's love trances.

preoccupations or love longing (172-176). To this point in *Lancelot du Lac*, the author chooses a form of "penser durement" to stress Arthur's deep preoccupation and trance-like state.

Similar to Arthur's first trance, Gauvain again reproaches the king for his behavior in front of his knights, but Arthur becomes angry with this nephew for disrupting his "cortois pensé" (1:778). While anger is a common reaction for characters abruptly pulled from their thoughts, Arthur justifies his actions because he was thinking about the best knight. However, Arthur's thoughts reveal his pride and gradual loss of prestige as he says that the greatest knights used to be at his court, but now Galehaut claims to have one. As Kennedy explains, "the king usually gives a detailed justification for his abstraction but the royal brooding is passive in that it does not give rise to action on Arthur's part, although it may well motivate action on the part of his knights" ("Broodings" 305). Arthur's trance, awakening, and complaint function as a narrative prosthesis as forty knights, including Gauvain, leave on a quest to find Lancelot. However, the narrator quickly tells the reader that the knights return in a year for the assembly with Galehaut, but he does not relate any of their adventures while they were gone because they all failed in their quest (1:782, 784). Arthur's behavior reveals his pride that will again resurface in his final banquet trance.[273]

Due to the author's "technique of intensification" (Kennedy, "Broodings" 314), Arthur's third trance at the table is the most dramatic and provokes the greatest spectacle as the narrator provides detailed descriptions of Arthur's awakening. In this scene, Gauvain has once again returned to court healed from his injuries, but at the end of the fifteen-day celebration Arthur falls into another reverie, forgets about the party, leans on a little knife, whines, and cries, "si chaï en un penser si grant que il an oblia et la feste et lo mengier et toz ces qui [i] estoient et soi

[273] In this scene, the narrator does not explain Gauvan's quest because it ended in failure. Elspeth Kennedy says, "only those travels which end in the completion of a quest are narrated" (*Lancelot* 200).

meïsmes, si commança a sospirer mout durement et a plorer des iauz de la teste, et fu apoiez sor un coutelet"(2:38). Interestingly, the description is much like that of a character falling fainted. Moreover, the verb "oblia" again emphasizes Arthur's lack of courtly etiquette. [274]

The narrator then increases the spectacle of the scene by providing a vivid image of the guests no longer eating, but staring at Arthur who is leaning on the knife so completely that the little blade curves.[275] Gauvain and five other knights become shocked at the duration of Arthur's trance, "et qant il virent lo roi si pansif, si furent tuit esbahi" (2:40), and syncope pauses the entire scene as everyone waits for Arthur to come to his senses. Gauvain, a little more cautious after angering his uncle the previous time, sends Arthur's niece, Laure de Carduel, to tell Arthur that his knights would like to know his thoughts. Too timid to speak to him, Laure pulls his napkin out from under his arm, causing the knife to slide away and his hand to hit the table (2:40). While reluctant to share his thoughts, Arthur gives in to the knights' insistence and says that the forty knights are cowardly and incapable since they broke their promise to bring the great knight back to court. As Arthur searches for Lancelot, Kennedy explains that the final two dinner trances are linked to the romance's "theme of the making of the hero's name" because Arthur's inability to find Lancelot causes his deep thinking ("Broodings" 310-311).

Shamed into action, the knights immediately leave to find Lancelot. Marie-Luce Chênerie states that the "prostration royale" often announces the beginning of an adventure (39), and Arthur's reverie, functioning as a narrative prosthesis, announces the adventures to follow. Arthur immediately regrets revealing his thoughts, and the scene ends with him falling on his bed in distress because he cannot change the minds of his knights (2:50). The reader is again left with

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274 Chrétien de Troyes uses "s'oblier" for Arthur in the *Chevalier au Lion* when Arthur is absent from court because he is sleeping. Kennedy also mentions the verbs *oblier* and *penser*, and makes reference to Sutherland's article ("Broodings" 302).

275 "Et il se fu apoiez sor lo coutelet si que tote la lemelle an fu ploiee" (2:40).

the image of an indecisive, regretful king, and these instances of trance-like syncope in the *Lancelot du Lac* illustrate Arthur's changing character, and his gradual fall from power, developed more fully in the *Mort le roi Artu*. Trances become expected for Arthur's character and unite the episodes from the beginning of the romance in which Arthur forgets his vassal to the continual quests for Lancelot. As Kennedy shows, the trances are "linked to the thematic structure and help to give the romance cohesion" ("Broodings" 301).

Syncope continues to link diverse episodes, as the characters of Gauvain, Claudas, and Arthur revolve around Lancelot's character. Moreover, it elucidates major themes in the romance as instances of fainting or trances show Lancelot's development as a knight, lead to his revealed identity, and define his relationship with Guinevere. Instances of syncope abound in the adventures of Lancelot, and are key in the major episodes that propel the narration forward and explain his character. Similar to Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte du Graal,* the reader sees an impulsive, naive, and unknown boy transform to a great knight, whose reputation grows to the extent that he becomes the object of everyone's quest. When Lancelot arrives at Arthur's court in white armor, the narrator describes him as confident, generous, courageous, wise, and well-raised by the *demoiselle du Lac*. In the beginning of his adventures, Lancelot's inexperience is evident, as he is so impatient to fight that he forgets his shield. He is also a knight who remains true to an impulsive oath. Lastly, the reader recognizes the young knight's naive courage as he attacks the knights of the *Douleureuse Garde* alone. In each of these three examples, Lancelot causes his opponent to faint, and the delay in the narration that the instances of syncope create allows the narrator to emphasize Lancelot's emotions. In the first example, Lancelot ignores the court's hesitation to let him help Lady Norhaut, and many knights refuse to fight him as they recognize his youth, and the fact that he is destined for greatness. However, Lancelot rescues a

young lady from a great knight by causing him to faint, thus signifying his defeat.[276] The repetition of Lancelot's young age, his clumsiness in forgetting his armor, and his mocking opponents juxtaposed with his complete victory over the grand knight is an effective introduction to Lancelot's knightly adventures, showcasing his increasing courage and strength.

The second example is linked to Lancelot's very first quest, in which he promised to fight any knight who does not give loyalty to the injured knight at Arthur's court. In this scene, Lancelot, traveling in the opposite direction of a tournament so that other knights do not try to delay him, spends the night at a castle and befriends his host. However, he learns that he must fight his new friend who waits for the Arthurian knight who defends the injured knight (1:686). Lancelot spends the night deliberating between his duty to an impulsive oath, and his compassion for his new friend. The host faints from fear upon discovering Lancelot's identity (1:688),[277] and syncope temporarily allows Lancelot to leave without breaking his word or hurting his host. However, the host regains consciousness, and the two must fight since they promised loyalty to different knights. This example reveals Lancelot's growing reputation, as well as the rigidity of a promise that he regrets, yet keeps.

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[276] Lancelot first meets a great knight guarding a young lady, but he refuses to fight Lancelot and says to return to see the lady when she awakens. However, when Lancelot returns they have disappeared. Another knight arrives to help Lancelot find the lady, but says he will take him to another who is more beautiful and who is being held captive in the middle of a lake. Lancelot is so impatient to fight that he forgets his shield and his squire must give him his helmet and lance. He tries to fight two knights by himself, but they laugh and refuse to fight, and let him have the lady that they are guarding at the lake (1:474). Lancelot then finds the first knight and demands to see the young lady. The knight mocks Lancelot and at first refuses to fight, but as Lancelot persists, the knight fights without armor. Lancelot delivers such a hard blow that the great knight faints, and Lancelot laments because he thinks he has killed an unarmed opponent (1:478). Lancelot has successfully defeated his opponent by unhorsing him, and the knight's loss of consciousness is a visible sign of defeat. Since the injured knight awakens to see his own blood and is afraid he will die, he allows Lancelot to have the lady, while Lancelot makes him promise not to fight anyone except for self-defense. Lancelot then sends both ladies back to Arthur's court with a request for Guinevere to knight him, and continues to help Lady Norhaut.

[277] "Et cil se pasme; et qant il est venuz de pasmoison, si dit au chevalier: 'Biaus sire, or vos en alez; et ge vos di que ge ainz miauz lo navré que lo mort.' Et tanto se repasme. Et li chevaliers s'an torne et si escuier et sa pucele" (1:688).

Syncope has shown Lancelot's impulsive courage, as well as his maturity and understanding of the gravity of his decisions. The third example of syncope then allows Lancelot to realize his own strength. Displaying his naive courage, Lancelot decides to attack the knights of the *Douloureuse Garde* alone without warning Arthur. As one injured enemy hangs from his galloping horse unconscious, Lancelot chases after him and drags him to the ground. While threatening to kill the knight, Lancelot's anger turns to distress and sobbing when the knight is unable to respond, and he thinks he is dead. Thinking of Gauvain and Arthur's other men whom he fears are also dead, Lancelot mourns for his enemy as he would his comrades.

> Lors est descenduz, si li arrache lo hiaume de la teste, et la li menace a colper. mais cil ne puet respondre, car il gist pasmez. Et lors cide bien li cheavliers que il soit morz, si en est trop dolanz por monseignor Gauvain et por les autres, car par ce les cuide bien avoir perduz. Grant piece fu an pasmoisons; et li Blans Chevaliers en a mout grant duel, si an plore des iauz dou chief, et dit que ja mais n'ira par desus chevalier, se ocirre ne lo velt, que bien cuide que cil en ait lo cuer crevé (1: 570, 572).

During the pause in action, Lancelot learns an important lesson as he promises to never fight a knight unless he intends to kill. This scene also parodies the mourning after the death of a knight in battle, since Lancelot's enemy is not actually dead, "A chief de grant piece revint li chevaliers de pasmeisons, si se plaint mout durement. Et i Blans Chevaliers ne fait sanblant que lui em poist, ainz dist que la teste li colpera, si li abat la vantaille et hauce l'espee (1: 572)." When the knight regains consciousness, Lancelot hides his emotion and again threatens to kill him, and he begs for mercy. This scene shows Lancelot's knightly prowess and ability to attack a group of knights alone, and his fainted enemy causes him to more fully understand the brutality of his actions.

In each of these developments, syncope is a useful narrative technique to illustrate Lancelot's growth as a knight. At first knowing only that he is of noble lineage, Lancelot gradually learns more about his identity. As Kennedy shows in the second chapter of her book, *Lancelot and the Grail*, identity is a central theme as other characters, along with Lancelot, try to discover who he is. With his growing reputation, Lancelot seeks to conceal his identity, as the narrator states, because he is a knight who wants to have glory and honor (1:492). Similar to Lancelot in Chrétien de Troyes's *Chevalier de la Charrette*, Lancelot's identity as a knight is closely related to his love for Guinevere, and both secrets gradually become more and more difficult to keep.

In one particular episode, Lancelot's own loss of consciousness almost reveals his name and facilitates Gauvain's search for the great knight. Lancelot fights valiantly against the King of One Hundred Knights for Lady Norhaut, and the other knights admire his prowess, but the King hits Lancelot so hard that they both fall off of their horses. Already injured from a previous battle and labeled *li chevaliers de la litiere*, Lancelot tries to continue to fight but faints when he remounts his horse, "Puis amainent au chevalier son cheval, et com il dut monter, si cheit pasmez" (1:620). While a realistic result of his blood loss, the faint punctuates his defeat, and everyone thinks that *li chevaliers de la litiere* or *li chevaliers au vermoil escu* is dead, as a fainted and dead state resemble each other. Yet the narrator says that Lancelot is unconscious, and the others bandage his wounds before the queen arrives to see him. Trying to gather his strength in front of the one he loves, Lancelot sits up and lies to the queen saying that he feels fine, but he faints again and his wounds reopen. Similar to the scenes surrounding Gauvain's injuries, characters immediately proclaim that Lancelot is dead after seeing him faint, and the queen leaves.

> Li chevaliers fu venuz de pasmoisons et oï ce qu'il disoient. Il oevre les iauz et voit la reine, et il s'esforce tant qu'il se lieve en seant. "Biax sire, fait la reine, comment vos est?" "Dame, fait il, mout bien, Ge n'ai nul mal." Et an ce qu'il disoit ce, et les bandes rompent et ses plaies li escrievent a seignier, et il se repasme. "Morz est", fait chascuns. Et la reine s'an va tantost. (1:622)

This first example reveals Lancelot's great capability to fight, despite his injuries, his effort to hide the gravity of his pain in the presence of his love, and the overwhelming wounds that cause him to lose consciousness. Showing an awareness of the role of emotions in causing a loss of consciousness, the doctor at the monastery declares that Lancelot must avoid "cuivre," or emotional suffering (1:622). Lancelot's injuries cause his collapses, and although ambiguous in this scene, there is an obvious connection between Lancelot's love for Guinevere and his instances of syncope, as we will soon see. His love is still a secret, even to the queen herself, but this love is the motivation for his knightly prowess.

Throughout the adventures of *Lancelot du Lac*, Lancelot is often injured, and the extended delays created by his fainting and fragility make it more difficult to hide his secrets. In this instance, his loss of consciousness forces the tournament to be suspended and allows Gauvain to be closer to finding the great knight. When the doctor reveals to Gauvain that this knight from the assembly also suffers from a previous wound, Gauvain becomes even more curious about his identity, and all of the undesired attention compels Lancelot to seek new lodging in order to preserve his secret. When one of the young ladies serving the *demoiselle du Lac* arrives desiring news of the knight from the *Douleureuse Garde*, Gauvain reveals that the injured knight will survive, and the young lady faints on her mule, "Quant ele l'ot, si li esvenoï li cuers, et ele se pasme sor lo col de la mule" (628). Characters commonly try to discover the

reason for another character's loss of consciousness, but in this scene, Gauvain explicitly asks, and she responds that joy has caused her to faint because she loves the knight even though he is meant to be with a different lady, "si li demande or quoi ele s'est pasmee. "Sire, de joie", fait ele" (628). While joy is not a common reason for syncope in the literary texts of this study, [278] this instance becomes another important clue for Gauvain's quest to find Lancelot, as the young lady joins him on his adventure. When they find Lancelot at the castle of Lady Norhaut, he attempts to remain incognito, but she recognizes his hand, kisses it, and faints again from joy and love, "Et ele cort por descovrir, mais il giete sa main encontre, si la prant par lo braz. Et ele vit la main, si la conoist, si la baisse tant que ele se pasme desus" (1:638). Although knowing Lancelot's identity, she keeps her promise of secrecy and only provides Gauvain with clues that lead him to the young lady at the *Douleureuse Garde*. In these two episodes, fainting creates moments of hesitation that show the young lady's innocent love, and both become important clues for Gauvain and allow him to be one step closer to finding Lancelot.

Lancelot's love is another closely guarded secret, but from his very first meeting with Guinevere syncope reveals his true feelings. His love will also be a key reason why Gauvain discovers his true identity. As we have seen in other texts, the lover's trance is an obvious symptom of lovesickness, and in Chrétien de Troyes's romances, the trance is a sign of a courtly lover. Similar to Chrétien's Lancelot in the *Charrette*, the Lancelot in *Lancelot du Lac* is a pensive, clumsy, and wandering knight. This image is apparent from the very first time he sees Guinevere at Arthur's court and is mesmerized by her beauty, to his later madness due to his separation from his love. The narrator even calls Lancelot the *chevalier qui pense* (1:814) due to his constant trance-like behavior. The young knight's first trance in the presence of the queen

[278] One other instance in *Lancelot du Lac* is when Gauvain faints from joy when he finds his brother, Agravain (2:192.). The only other instance from joy in the chosen texts of this study occurs in Marie de France's *Fraisne*.

sets the tone for the remainder of the romance as his attraction turns to complete lovesickness and his desire to serve his *dame*. As his love deepens and his trances turn to madness, his identity is revealed and he is eventually healed of his lovesickness.[279]

As Lancelot arrives at Arthur's court to become a knight, he is immediately love struck due to Guinevere's beauty. When Guinevere takes his hand to ask where he his from, his whole body shakes like he is awakening from sleep, and he is so lost in thought that he does not hear her, "Lors lo prant la reine par la main, si li demande don il est. Et qant il la sant, si tressaut toz autresin come s'il s'esveillast, et tant pense a li durement qu'il ne set qu'ele li a dit" (1:438). Both the descriptions of his awakening and the fact that he is unaware that Guinevere is speaking to him illustrate his state of syncope, as he is separated from reality. The expression "penser durement" highlights the trance, and when Lancelot does not know his name or where he is from, Guinevere notices that he is "esbahiz et trespansez" (1:438). She suspects that his behavior is due to love for her, so she leaves in order not to make him further lose his mind.[280] Highlighting the importance of courtly discretion, the narrator says that Guinevere does not want anyone to suspect what she does, so she tells the court that Lancelot was not well raised, "Et por ce qu'ele nel velt en greignor folie metre, ele se lieve de la place et dit, por ce que ele ne velt que nus pant a vilenie et que nus ne s'aparçoive de ce que ele sospeçoit, que cil vallez ne li senble pas estre senez tres bien, et qui qu'il soit, sages o fox, il a este enseigniez mauvaisement" (1:438, 440). With the terms "folie" and "fox" Guinevere highlights the madness of Lancelot's behavior, and "because the lover who is in a trance does not conform to normal standards of behaviour, he is frequently called *fol* by bystanders" (Kennedy, "Broodings" 304). Interestingly, this same *folie*

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[279] The first volume of *Lancelot du Lac* ends with the couple's first kiss, and the second volume begins with Lancelot and Galehaut's adventures in Sorelois.

[280] "Maintenant aparçoit bien la reine qu'il est esbahiz et trespansez, mais ele n'osse pas cuidier que ce soit por li; et neporquant ele lo sospece un po" (1:438).

will define the love relationship of Guinevere and Lancelot as the text describes their *fole amor*.

As is evident by this first trance, Lancelot falls in love at first sight, and as his love increases, he enters a trance each time he sees her. For example, Lancelot is lost in thought while riding to help Lady Norhaut and is awakened when he is hit in the face with a tree branch (1: 462), he enters a trance near a ford and is awakened to fight the knight claiming to guard the area for Guinevere (1:492), and he lets the door slam in Guinevere's face at the *Douleureuse Garde* (1:580). These instances unite the story and punctuate the narration as Lancelot travels from adventure to adventure. While the narrator does not always explicitly state that Lancelot is thinking about Guinevere, it is implied throughout the entire *Lancelot du Lac*, and the parallels with the romances of Chrétien de Troyes make the connections between Lancelot's love and trances identifiable since a reader would have already been aware of the context (Kennedy, "Broodings" 308).[281] Episodes that resemble Chrétien's Lancelot are evident as Lancelot lets his horse guide him into numerous situations. For instance, Lancelot loses touch with reality when he hears a young lady sing and ends up injured and stuck under his horse (1:602).[282] In another series of trances, he earns the reputation as a mad knight, "lo plus fol chevalier que ge onques veïsse" (1:706). Continually in a trance, Lancelot stares at Guinevere, is taken to the queen because he revealed that he was looking at her, wanders off, almost drowns as his horse leads him directly into the water, is saved by Yvain, and then let go because they think he has lost his mind. Finally the cowardly knight, Daguenet le Fol, captures Lancelot, but Lancelot enters

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[281] In this quotation, Kennedy is specifically referencing the episode in which Lancelot lets his horse guide him to the *Gué la Roine*.

[282] "si oï canter une damoisele moult haut et moult cler. Et quant il fut outré, [si commença a penser moult durement,] et ses chevax le porta la ou il volt … Et li chevax ne fu mie fres, car il ot alé grant jornee, si s'encombra des pies devant et caï en unes crevaches moult grans. Li chevaliers jut desos moult longement, tant que si escuier l'en releverent" (1: 602).

another trance and cuts Guinevere's dress as he drops his sword.[283] Each instance of syncope that finds Lancelot wandering around on his horse subsequently brings him back to Guinevere because others think he is mad, but ironically another trance leads him away. The author uses "toz s'an oblie," "penser mout durement," and "regarder," to indicate Lancelot's complete absorption in his thoughts and his unmindfulness of the situation. As seen in Chrétien's characters of Yvain, Perceval, and Lancelot, the love trances show the Lancelot of the prose romances to be a courtly knight only thinking about his lady.[284] The motif of the wandering knight is taken to the extreme to show the depth of Lancelot's love, but also to show the dramatic contrast of his madness and his heroic feats in battle, as the knights follow the mysterious knight and watch him heroically defeat giants that are enemies of Arthur's court (1:716). This dramatic effect creates shock when Yvain realizes that the mad knight and best knight are the same; Gauvain, Guinevere, and the court finally discover Lancelot's identity (1:720). In the terms of Catherine Clément, Lancelot is a "héros-syncope" (295), as delays and anticipations surround his character. Clément applies this idea to Tristan from *Tristan and Iseut* because "amour-fou," characterizes him (298-299). This same idea is applicable to Lancelot, as he is drawn away from the court in trances thinking about his lady, and these trances delay the discovery of his identity. As his love increases, his "amour-fou" increases and he is further delayed, as he cannot fight due to injury and his love causes him to go mad.

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283 "Et li chevaliers commança la dame a regarder, si que toz s'an oblie" (1:696).
"Et il commence a penser mout durement, si an chevalcha plus soef" (1:704).
"Mais il lo laisse aler la o il viaut, car il ne fait se la reine regarder non. Et li chevax ot talant de boivre, si s'adrece vers l'eive, si saut anz" (1:706).
"Et lors commence a regarder a la reine, et ses chevaus l'am porte tot contraval la riviere. N'ot gaires alé qu'il encontra Daguenet lo fol, qui li demande o il vait. Et il pense, si ne dit rien" (1:708).
"Li chevaliers tenoit sa lance parmi lo travers, et com il oï la reine parler, si dreça lo chief, et la mains li lasche et sa lance chiet, si que li fers passa lo samit del mantel la reine" (1:712).

284 Another parallel with Chrétien's romances occurs when Lancelot tells the knight that awakens him from his first trance that it is not courteous to disrupt his thoughts, "vos n'iestes mie cortois qui de mon pensé m'avez gité"(1:698).

Just as Guinevere and the court are surprised by the mad knight's valiance, Lancelot's dual reputation grows. When he courageously fights part of Galehaut's army by himself, Galehaut's knights, for example, mock the unresponsive Lancelot by hanging his sword on his neck and throwing mud in his eyes because they think that "li chevaliers soit fox" (1:744). However, when the mud breaks his trance and he fights, one of the knights realizes that Lancelot is not quite as demented as they thought, "'Tenez, sire, fait il, miauz i est anpleiez que ge ne cuidoie.'" (1:744). These scenes of trances mixed with his valiant fighting create irony and comedy, while also showing how the love trances overwhelm and control Lancelot's body like an actual loss of consciousness.

While not immediately apparent to Guinevere or other knights, it is evident that Lancelot's behavior is due to his love for the queen, and the story continues to parallel the character of Lancelot in the *Charrette*. Furthermore, Kennedy explains, "trances and madness in the Prose *Lancelot* have resonances which evoke well known love scenes in twelfth century romance, they are closely related to one of the main themes of the work – love as an inspiration for chivalry" ("Broodings" 309). In the final battle between Galehaut and Arthur, Lancelot fights valiantly after receiving a letter from Guinevere, yet once peace is established, he continues to be lost in thought, notable by the verbs "penser durement" and "s'oblier."[285] His behavior worsens as he spends the night sobbing, almost faints when Galehaut asks him to reveal the reason for his

[285] In this scene, when Galehaut and Arthur resume fighting, Lancelot is again lost in thought leaning on his lance until he receives a letter from his lady and fights valiantly. The narrator makes reference to the pensive red knight that Galehaut's men mocked a year prior at the beginning of the truce. As Galehaut and Arthur's armies end the truce and begin to fight, Lancelot is again lost in thought and leaning on his lance looking at Guinevere (1:806). Everyone desires to know who this black knight is, and Gauvain remembers seeing a pensive, red knight at the ford acting the same way. Lady Malehaut sends him a message in the name of Gauvain, and Lancelot awakens to fight. However, Gauvain convinces Guinevere to send a letter in her name, so that he will fight on their side for love of her (814). The *chevalier noir* then fights so valiantly and defeats so many men that he catches everyone's attention. Peace is established between Arthur and Galehaut, but Lancelot is once again in a trance, "Et qant li cheavliers oï parler de la reine, si s'anbruncha et comance a penser si durement que toz s'an oblie" (1:854).

distress,[286] cries, whines, almost loses his senses,[287] becomes pale, has red swollen eyes, and states that seeing the queen would cause both joy and pain (1:868). The cause of Lancelot's strange behavior is evident for a reader familiar with the lovesick characters in the *romans d'antiquité* and Chrétien de Troyes's romances. Since Lancelot's true emotions are obviously visible, Galehaut also suspects the reason for his friend's distress.

The identity of the *chevalier noir* remains hidden until Galehaut arranges a secret meeting between Guinevere and Lancelot, and Lady Malehaut immediately recognizes him, causing him further distress. This scene allows the narrator to summarize all of Lancelot's heroic feats, while also displaying him as the trembling, love-struck knight in the presence of Guinevere, "Et li cheavliers tranble si durement que a poines puet la reine saluer, et a tote la color perdue, si que la reine s'an mervoille" (1:876). Answering Guinevere's questions, Lancelot humbly reveals that he is the *chevalier noir, chevalier blanc*, and that Guinevere knighted him by giving him a sword. From his exploits, Guinevere proclaims that he is Lancelot du Lac (1:884), and similar to Chrétien's *Charrette*, it is Guinevere who first reveals to Lancelot that she knows his identity.[288]

Following the revelation of his name, Guinevere suspects that a lady is the cause of his prowess, and Lancelot declares his love with difficulty and tears, "Ha!, dame, fait il, bien voi que

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286 "et fait tel duel que par un po que il ne se pasme" (1:856).

287 "Lors recomance a sospirer, et les lermes li vienent as iauz, et il se torne d'autre part, si est tex conreez que il ne set o il est" (1:866, 868).

288 Many characters know Lancelot's identity, such as the young lady of the *demoiselle du Lac* who reveals Lancelot's name to Gauvain, and Gauvain who reveals his name at Arthur's court (1:678). Yet Guinevere is the first to tell Lancelot that she knows who he is, and link all of the adventures to one knight.

il lo me covient a dire. Dame, ce iestes vos" (1:886).[289] While Lancelot's trances juxtaposed with his success in battle have been signs of his devotion to his lady, the text now confirms Lancelot's intentions and love. Although he has difficulty expressing it, Lancelot's love is evident by his love trances and by his actions, not his words. Chrétien de Troyes first shows Lancelot as a man of action and feeling. In the twelfth-century romances, lovers' monologues often accompany the symptoms of lovesickness, but as Micha notes, monologues are rare in *Lancelot* (*Essais* 249). Furthermore, Kennedy explains, "Lancelot gives expression to his love in deeds, not words, hence the almost total absence of love speeches in the romance" (*Lancelot* 59).

Just as Lancelot in the *Charrette* is the perfect courtly knight devoted to his lady, so Lancelot in the prose romance shows fidelity to Guinevere. Many elements of courtly love are visible in this final scene such as paleness, fear, desire for secrecy, and the need for confidants.[290] Moreover, Guinevere's test of faithfulness for Lancelot highlights her role as *dame*, as she tells him that his heart must be somewhere else because he keeps looking in the direction of Lady Malehaut and the other ladies. The narrator states explicitly that Guinevere tries to make Lancelot uncomfortable because she knows that he does not love anyone else, "Et ce disoit ele bien por veoir coment ele [lo] porra metre a malaise, car ele cuide bien que il ne pansast d'amors s'a lui non" (1:890). This test confirms Lancelot's true emotions as he almost faints and Guinevere must pull him up by his collar to keep him from falling, "Et cil an fu si angoissos que

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[289] Lancelot explains that the first day he left Arthur's court, Guinevere said "A Deu, biaus douz amis" (1:888), and the word "ami" is what makes him fight so valiantly and occupies his thoughts. Guinevere, however, says that the word has no meaning because she says it to many knights, but she is glad that it made him a *prodome*.

[290] As explored in chapter three, Andreas Capellanus's rules of courtly love cover all of these aspects. For example, fear: "l'amoureux est toujours craintif" (xx, 183); paleness: "Tout amant doit pâlir en présence de son amante (xv 182); confidants: Car un amant a le droit de trouver pour son amour un confident qui lui convienne, auprès de qui il puisse trouver un secret appui dans les affaires de cœur, et qui lui offre sa sympathie dans les moments difficiles. Il est aussi permis à sa bien-aimée d'avoir une confidente semblable" (163-64); secrecy: "les amants en effet, ne doivent point s'adresser mutuellement des signes sauf si'ils sont sûrs d'etre à l'abri de tout traquenard" (151-152).

par un po ne se pasma, mais la paors des dames qu'il regardoit lo retint" (1:890). Fear of revealing his love to others keeps him conscious. Lancelot is fearful in love, as Galehaut explains (1:892), and his behavior exemplifies that of the courtly lover.

From Lancelot's reaction and Galehaut's pleading to show his friend pity, Guinevere's behavior changes, and she agrees to give Lancelot a kiss. Since Lancelot is barely able to speak, Galehaut asks for him, and the kiss is a seal of his devotion. Alluding to this scene, Kennedy notes the positive and negative aspects of Lancelot's fear in love as she says, "his fear of his lady's displeasure and of being unworthy of her has its positive side, and his love trances lead to action. However … when it comes to confessing his love to her, his fear makes him passive, unwilling to take the initiative; and here his love trances are associated with passivity" (*Lancelot* 61). As Kennedy describes, the love trances have a positive side because they propel Lancelot to action, thus functioning as a narrative prosthesis. However, as we have seen, Lancelot's love trances also make him appear deranged to the other characters, and his immobile trance-like states make him passive and unmindful, whether his horse leads him into the water or he is unable to speak in the presence of his lady. In her article on Chaucer's *Troilus*, Gretchen Mieszkowski argues that courtly lovers were often passive, but this does not render them effeminate. She mentions Alexandre in *Cligès* and gives the episode of Lancelot's first kiss as noteworthy examples (51).[291] Mieszkowski says that if a medieval audience considered fainting effeminate, then "battle-hardened, tournament-winning, giant- and dragon-slaying heroes would not have been depicted fainting" (52). Syncope, whether in a loss of consciousness or a trance,

[291] Mieszkowski provides numerous examples from medieval literature to prove that Troilus's faint does not make him passive or effeminate because the great knights and heroes of medieval literature faint. While noticeable in male and female characters in medieval literature, she suggests that fainting "acquired feminine gender between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries" (54), and that twentieth and twentieth-century views affect the ways in which critics analyze Troilus's fainting. As alluded to by Mieszkowski, both Jill Mann and Elizabeth Liggins also analyze Troilus's swoon. While focusing their analyses on *Troilus*, Mann makes reference to the madness of Yvain, Tristan, and Lancelot (328), and Liggins lists treatments and causes of swooning (93-94).

can represent fear and passivity. However, as is the case with Lancelot, but both are elements of his courtly love and show him to be devoted to his lady.

After the kiss, Lancelot's love grows deeper and the text continues to juxtapose his madness and passivity in his trances with his knightly prowess. Love becomes even more prominent, and syncope redirects the reader's attention to this theme from the fainting messenger bringing the cracked shield to Guinevere[292] to Lancelot's trance and complete obedience in battle.[293] The cracked shield represents the love of Guinevere and Lancelot and is a symbol of their love and Lancelot's madness, as the young lady says that it will bring Guinevere joy and help her suffering (2:150). After spending the night with Lancelot, the crack in the shield mends and Guinevere is sure of her love (2:520), but when the lovers are separated, Lancelot's lovesickness turns to madness. Lady of the la Roche takes Arthur, Galehaut, Gauvain, and Lancelot prisoner, and Lancelot's thoughts of his lady no longer occupy him. Similar to Yvain's madness in Chrétien's *Chevalier au Lion*, Lancelot has lost his mind, "et fait tel duel a jornee

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[292] In this scene, Guinevere is trying to convince Hector's lady to let Hector go on a quest to find Gauvain for Lady Roestoc, when an injured messenger and a young lady of the *demoiselle du Lac* arrive with a cracked shield that can only be mended when Lancelot and Guinevere's love is complete. Lancelot unhorsed this messenger in an earlier combat causing him to break his arm in the fall, and the painful touching bones on the inside of his arm cause him to almost faint (2: 148). His entry creates a spectacle as the young lady carries the shield for him, but also because of the narrator's graphic descriptions. As referenced in the section on Gauvain, this knight also causes Lady Roestoc to faint when he reveals that Gauvain has forgotten her like she forgot him (2:158). Lady Roestoc's faint helps convince the young lady to let Hector go on a quest for Gauvain. The text then leaves the story of Hector and Lady Roestoc, using a hyperbolic modulation (2:162), and returns to Guinevere who tries to help the messenger remove his armor. Before he removes his hauberk, he faints twice from pain (2:164). The knight's fainting pauses the narration concerning Hector's search for Gauvain and reminds the reader of the main theme of Lancelot and Guinevere's love.

[293] Lancelot only receives comfort by thinking about his lady (2:484) and he struggles with hiding his identity in battle and serving her. Wearing gifts she gives him, Lancelot's appearance remains hidden except to her. He also has a comb with her hair, alluding to Lancelot's fascination with the comb in Chrétien's *Charrette* (2:464). When Hector and Gauvain seek Lancelot and Galehaut's help to fight Arthur's enemies, Lancelot attacks Gauvain without recognizing him, but soon throws down his arms and cries uncontrollably fearing he has lost his lady's favor for fighting Gauvain. This scene finally ends Gauvain's quest for Lancelot as Lancelot asks for forgiveness and reveals his identity (2:500). Gauvain then leads him to *La Roche* where he sees Guinevere and resumes his trance-like state. Fighting in the tournament, his only response is that he will do whatever pleases his lady (2:510). Lancelot then fights so well that his prowess mesmerizes the crowd. As Chênerie notes, Lancelot's obedience in the tournament resembles his character in Chrétien's *Charrette* (2:511).

que nuns ne lo puet conforter. Et il a la teste voide, si li est montee une folie et une raige o chief si durement que riens ne puet a lui durer" (2:534). While Lancelot has been the only one to display symptoms of lovesickness to this point in *Lancelot du Lac*, Lancelot's separation causes Guinevere to also appear as the suffering lover.[294] The narration alternates between her mourning and fainting and Lancelot's madness and fainting to depict the depth of their love. During these instances of syncope, the battle seems to pause between Arthur's army and the Saxons and Irish, as the delay redirects the reader's attention to suffering and love instead of descriptions of battle.

In four different instances of fainting and one allusion to the fact that she will lose consciousness if she does not see Lancelot, Guinevere resembles the lovesick couples of the twelfth century who continually faint and awaken to a reality that causes them to lament and faint again. In this first instance that sets the tone for Guinevere's despair, Lancelot is released from prison due to his madness[295] and returns to court. However a crowd follows him due to his strange behavior and the spectacle causes Guinevere to collapse into the arms of Lady Malehaut, "Et qant ele lo voit, si se pasme, car toz li mondes lo seüst comme celui qui est hors do san. Et qant ele revient de pasmoison, si dist a la dame de Malohaut, qui antre ses braz la tient, que ele morra ja" (2:536). Trying to avoid further emotional distress and fainting,[296] Guinevere distances herself from Lancelot, but since she is the only one who can calm him, she stays.[297] As is common in Chrétien de Troyes, the narrator explains that the other characters do not discern the

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294 Similar to the *Charrette* in which Guinevere does not truly express her feelings until after she hears a rumor that Lancelot has died, in the *Lancelot du Lac* Guinevere does not seem lovesick until Lancelot becomes mad.

295 Chênerie explains that it was the custom in the Middle Ages to let a mad person go free if they did not have a family or a protector (2:535).

296 "Et puis s'est ferue an une chanbre, car ele se cremoit pasmer por lui, Et qant ele i est, si n'i puet durer, ainz revient hors por lui veoir" (2:536).

297 Lady Malehaut suggests that Lancelot's behavior is a ruse to see Guinevere, but if not, that they will heal him of his madness if he really is out of his mind. However Malhaut's attempts to calm Lancelot are unsuccessful as he throws rocks at her.

real reason for Guinevere's distress because they think that she is upset due to Arthur's imprisonment,[298] and their love remains hidden due to the appearance, versus the reality, of the situation. The narration pauses due to Lancelot's madness that separates him from reality and Guinevere's constant mourning and fainting, and the narrator says that this situation lasts for a long time, "Ensi dure longuement li diaus la reine et la forsenerie Lancelot" (2:538). When the Saxons arrive to fight, it seems like the action will recommence, but Guinevere's despair deepens and her faint again delays the narrative time, "si voit tot lo monde qui asaut d'une part et d'autre, et ele se pasme maintenant" (2:538). While Lady Malehaut's question as to why Guinevere is killing herself suggests that Guinevere is punishing herself, Guinevere's additional loss of consciousness represents her despair at Lancelot's inability to fight in battle and the armies defeat, "Puis revient a Lancelot. Et si tost com ele lo voit, si se pasme" (2:538). She tells Lady Malehaut that she wishes to die with everyone else, and her unconscious state represents her desire.

Elspeth Kennedy explains that Lancelot justifies his *recreantise* in previous situations of passivity because the same love that causes him to be lost in thought also causes him to act. However, "it is when he is forced into passivity, when emprisoned by the Saxons, and is unable to fight to defend the queen that he lapses, not just into meditation, but into madness" ("Broodings" 307). Separation from love and his inability to prove his prowess cause a much deeper state of syncope. Love will again compel him to act, but he must first awaken from his state of madness. Paralleling Erec's *recreantise* in Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*, Lancelot semi-awakens to hear Guinevere lamenting his past prowess, puts on the mended shield, and starts attacking a round stone column. He subsequently breaks his lance, and is so exhausted that he

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[298] "Puis lo couche aveques li et fait tote nuit tel duel que mervoilles est comment ele dure. mais chascuns cuide que ce soit proprement por lo roi" (2:538).

falls fainted, "Et qant il a ce fait, si est si vains que il ne se puet sostenir, ainz chiet jus, si se pasme" (2:538,540). Similar to the continuously fainting Guinevere, Lancelot awakens to wonder where he is, hears that he is in the presence of the queen and faints again, then reawakens to desire death because Galehaut and Gauvain are in prison.[299] With each awakening, Lancelot gains a greater awareness of reality, and his question about his comrades alerts Guinevere to the fact that his senses have returned.

Lancelot's awakening seems to end the cyclical narration of his madness and Guinevere's fainting, but as he removes the shield from his neck, his madness returns and Guinevere loses consciousness, "Et si tost com elles li ont osté, si saut sus et est autresin forsenez comme devant, si s'an torne fuiant aval la sale. Et com la reine lo voit, si se pasme" (2:542). While the previous instances illustrate dramatically the depth of Guinevere's despair and the extent of Lancelot's separation from reality, this final instance of both lovers' syncope functions as a narrative prosthesis. During the queen's unconsciousness and Lancelot's state of syncope, the narrator introduces the arrival of the *Demoiselle du Lac*. Guinevere awakens when she hears everyone welcoming the guests, and Lancelot's sanity returns when he wears the shield on his neck.[300] When Lancelot finally awakens completely, Guinevere must explain what has happened, and he considers it all to be a dream, "mais jo cuidoie avoir songié" (2: 548), thus reinforcing his complete unawareness and separation from reality. In the remainder of *Lancelot du Lac,* Lancelot's strength in battle is evidence of his healing, as he frees Arthur, Galehaut, and Gauvain

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[299] "Et qant il revient de pasmoisons, si demande ou il est. Et il li dient que il est an de pasmoisons, si demande ou il est. Et il li dient que il est an l'ostel a la reine Guenièvre. Et qant il l'ot, si se repame" (2:540).

[300] "En ce que la reine gist pasmee, antra laianz une damoiselle mout granz et mout belle et mout gente … Et ele fu revenue de pasmoisons, si oï la noise que l'an dit: 'Bienvaignant, dame.' … Puis li met l'escu au col. Et il soffre qanque ele li velt faire. Et si tost come ele li a mis, si rest an son san" (2:542,544). The *Demoiselle* puts ointment on Lancelot and tells Guinevere that he must take a bath when he awakens from his sleep. She also reiterates to Guinevere the importance of being completely devoted to her love.

from prison, and then defends Guinevere against the false Guinevere who dupes Arthur. While Lancelot and Guinevere's love is obvious to the confidants and the *demoiselle du Lac*, the rest of Arthur's court remains oblivious to the relationship and the couple continues to hide their love.[301]

Syncope is thus essential in showing Lancelot's development as a knight as well as illustrating the important themes of identity and love. Trances are a reoccurring element of Lancelot's character and elucidate his love relationship, but while Lancelot's love makes him a strong knight, it also becomes the reason he is unable to continue the quest for the grail in the *Queste del Saint Graal*. The non-cyclic version of *Lancelot du Lac* gives "little suggestion of a conflict between love and loyalty or of moral condemnation of adulterous love" (Kennedy, *Lancelot* 77), and Micha also notes "l'absence de condamnation explicite de l'adultère" (*Essais* 77).[302] Yet in the *Queste del Saint Graal*, adulterous courtly love is incompatible with a spiritual quest. As we have seen, a comparison of Chrétien de Troyes's *Chevalier de la Charrette* and the *Conte du Graal* already presents this problem. However, Chrétien does not discuss the relationship of Lancelot and Guinevere in the *Conte du Graal*, as the writers of the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle* were the first to give the love story an important role in the grail quest (Bogdanow 34). The non-cyclic *Lancelot du Lac* presents a worldly knighthood with the courtly knight obeying his lady, while the *Queste del Saint Graal* depicts a spiritual knighthood. Instances of

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[301] For instance, after Lancelot and the freed prisoners arrive back at court, Guinevere runs to Lancelot and kisses him on the lips. Trying to cover her actions, she tells Lancelot that she does not know who he is but that she offers him a kiss of honor for what he has done for Arthur (2:576). As Gauvain and the other knights explain who he is, she pretends to be shocked to learn the knight is Lancelot.

[302] In chapter three of his *Essais*, Micha uses this as a key argument as to why he thinks that the author of the non-cyclic version is different from the one who wrote about Lancelot's childhood (83). As we have seen in the introduction of this chapter, Elspeth Kennedy (*Lancelot and the Grail*) suggests that the cyclic version better prepares readers for the problem of Guinevere and Lancelot's adulterous love.

syncope elucidate Lancelot's prowess and suffering in love in *Lancelot du Lac*, and now illustrate the gravity of sin in the *Queste*.

Queste del Saint Graal

Written around 1220,[303] the *Queste del Saint Graal* begins as many of Arthur's best knights, including Gauvain, Hector, Perceval, and Lancelot, surround the Round Table and try in vain to remove a sword from a block of red marble. When one of the seats at the table changes its inscription from the *Siege Perilleux* to the *li Sieges Galaad*, the knights soon discover that Galaad is Lancelot's son. Galaad easily removes the sword from the marble, and the quest for the grail begins. Similar to Chrétien de Troyes's romance, the *Queste* describes the search for the grail, however this romance expands the story with the background of the Fisher King, follows the adventures of Galaad, shows other knights' failed quests, and places a greater emphasis on Lancelot's adventures, instead of Perceval's emergence as a knight and spiritual awakening.

It becomes clear that only Bohort, Galaad, and Perceval are able to find the grail (*Queste* 146).[304] The reader learns of each character's inability to achieve the quest due to sin, such as Melylant's greed and pride (45), Gauvain's maliciousness, treachery, and lack of confession (54), and most notably Lancelot's adultery and disobedience, causing his inability to move or speak before the grail (61). Moreover, when many of his knights begin the quest, Arthur becomes lost in thought and desires to stop his greatest knights from leaving, "et lors fu pensiz durement et en cel penser li comencent les lermes a coler tot contreval la face … 'Je ferroie, fet il, trop volentiers remanoir ceste Queste s'il pooit estre.'" (*Queste* 21-22). Arthur wants to keep

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303 Albert Pauphilet suggests this date, as he says that the *Queste* was written between 1214-1227 (*Etudes* 12).

304 All citations from the *Queste* come from Albert Pauphilet's edition.

his knights at his court, and his trance and deep distraction illustrate the difference between the court's worldly quests and the spiritual quests, similar to the *Conte du Graal*.[305]

Throughout the adventures many mysterious, unexplainable events occur and monks subsequently explain what has happened by using Biblical allusions and revealing the importance of repentance and serving Jesus Christ. The search for the grail is an allegory representing the search for God (Pauphilet, *Etudes* 25). Referring to the author's style, Pauphilet states, "tout, dans la *Queste*, est subordonné à l'intention morale" (*Etudes* 173) because the author primarily ensures that the reader understands the moral and psychological descriptions instead of elaborately describing the adventures, combats, scenes, etc. (173-174). The same appears to be true of syncope as it redirects attention to the characters' sin and the ability or inability to achieve the quest. Instances elucidate the gravity of sin, as well as showing the importance of repentance and healing. Lancelot, for example, eventually confesses his sins and understands that he can belong to a heavenly knighthood. As opposed to Chrétien's *Conte du Graal* in which Perceval and Gauvain go on the quest, in the *Queste* more than one hundred and fifty knights are eager to search for the grail, and Pauphilet explains, "l'élargissement de la quête était le moyen de montrer plusieurs types d'âme à la recherche de Dieu" (*Etudes* 120). As the knights search, syncope is critical in understanding the different successes and failures.

The first example arises at the beginning of the romance when Galaad receives a magical shield with a red cross from a mysterious white knight. His squire, Mélyant, overhears the mysteries and accompanies Galaad on the quest, also desiring to become a knight. When they come to an impasse, Mélyant takes the route to the left and sees a beautiful table and a seat with a golden crown. Coveting the crown, he decides to take it, but knights soon attack and injure

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[305] As discussed in chapter three, Rupert Pickens explains the court's inability to understand the spiritual quest in the *Conte du Graal* (*Welsh Knight* 77-79).

him. Galaad arrives and fights the knights, but thinking he will die when the lance is removed from his side, Mélyant asks Galaad to take him to a nearby abbey for confession. Galaad then removes the lance, and Mélyant faints from the pain, resembling the dead state he thought would come, "Et il met la main au fer et le trait hors a tout le fust. Et cil se pasme d'angoisse" (43-44). An older monk says that Mélyant's misfortune is due to his sin, "que ceste mischance vos est avenue par vostre pechié" (44). Having taken the path to the left, the pathway of sin, Mélyant thought that he could accomplish the quest with great valiance and did not understand that the quest is spiritual. The monk explains that Mélyant fell into the devil's trap of pride and greed (45), and the two attacking knights represent these two sins.

The narrator presents a new knight having difficulty on the quest because of sin, and this sin, allegorically seen in the attacking knights, tries to kill him (46). As is common throughout the romance, a monk then explains the meaning of the allegory, and this monk tells Mélyant that because of his sins, he was led to the fear of death so that he will once again trust and have strength in our Savior, "…jusques a paor de mort, por ce que tu te fiasses mielz une autre foiz en l'aide Nostre Seignor que en ta force" (46). Fainting dramatically punctuates Mélyant's fear, as he states that he is afraid he will die due to his injuries, and his unconsciousness resembles death. Consequently, Mélyant awakens to repent.

Pauphilet discusses this episode and shows that the adventures surrounding the search for the grail, whether they are successes or failures of different knights, are often called the *"aventures del Saint Graal"* (26). In this instance, as the monk explains to Mélyant the religious significance of the events, the narrator refers to these events as the adventures and says "assez parlerent des aventures dou Saint Graal entre le preudome et les dues chevaliers cele nuit" (*Queste* 46, *Etude* 26). Pauphilet explains that the adventure of the grail is not the search for the

object of the grail, but the working of God in the lives of the characters (26).[306] Mélyant's adventures have nothing to do with the grail, but lead him to a greater understanding of God. As characters search, the reader is able to understand how each character mistakes a worldly quest for a spiritual one. Mélyant desires the golden crown to fulfill his pride and greed, yet his desires make him unsuitable for the quest and he must repent. This spiritual quest is distinct from the quests in courtly romance in which knights search for honor.

Another example of sin hindering the quest occurs when Bohort, Lancelot's cousin and one of the three chosen heroes, fights with his brother, Lionel. Bohort meets an old priest and confesses as he says that a knight can only continue on the quest if he repents of his sins (164). As one of the chosen knights, Bohort shows that the knights much not be perfect to complete the quest, but repentant. Pauphilet states that Bohort is "le plus voisin de l'ordinaire imperfection humaine … Bohort comprend comme il faut la vie terrestre et sa signification religieuse" (*Etudes* 131). In this scene, Bohort discovers that two knights have taken Lionel and a lady captive. Fainting is a definitive sign of defeat as Bohort saves the young lady from her kidnappers, and an external sign of distress when he thinks his brother is dead.[307] Another instance then occurs to illustrate the gravity of an injury. Bohort soon realizes that his brother's body was part of a

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306 "Ainsi peu à peu s'éclaire et se complète le sens du livre: la quête du Saint Graal, les aventures du Saint Graal, c'est l'histoire des âmes à la recherche de Dieu, la description de leurs efforts, de leurs défaillances, de leurs échecs et de leurs succès. Sous l'apparence chevaleresque, c'est la grande aventure de l'homme qui est ici exposée …" (*Etudes* 26).

307 Bohort decides to help the lady first, and does so successfully as he causes one of the knights to faint from his horse, thus unhorsing the enemy with a dramatic image of defeat, "Et cil se pasme de l'angoisse qu'il sent" (176). Although he saves the lady, he is too late to save his brother. When the monk shows him Lionel's body, Bohort faints to the ground from distress, "Lors a si grant duel qu'il ne se puet tenir en estant, ainz chiet a terre touz pasmez et gist grant piece en pasmoison" (178). Bohort's loss of consciousness resembles the faint of a *planctus* in hagiography as he falls to the ground fainted and remains unconscious for a long period of time. Additionally, Bohort awakens to immediately trust in his faith in Christ for strength and support, "Cil que j'ai pris a compaignon et a mestre e soit conduisierres et sauverres en toz perilz. Car des or mes n'ai ge a penser fors de m'ame, puis que vos estes trespassez de vie" (178). This reawakening resembles Berthe's in the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon* who trusts in God despite her distress, and well as King Ban's in *Lancelot du Lac*.

temptation to distract him from the quest, and making the sign of the cross, all the enchantments disappear. A monk reveals that a miracle saved Lionel's life, but that he does not have faith in the Savior (186). Knowing that he was correct to save the lady first, Bohort is happy to see his brother, but Lionel hates him and calls him disloyal. As Bohort pleads for forgiveness, Lionel attacks and severely injures his brother by hitting him with his horse, "Et Boort se pasme de l'angoisse qu'il sent, si qu'il cuide bien morir sanz confession. Et quant Lyonel l'a tel atorné qu'il n'a mes pooir de lever, si descent a terre car il bee a couper li la teste" (189-190). Fainting emphasizes the excruciating pain, but also pauses the narration to juxtapose the different characters of Bohort and Lionel. While Bohort awakens to worry that he will die without confessing first, Lionel's anger increases and he tries again to kill his brother. Showing the valiance and importance of Bohort, both a hermit and Calogrenant arrive to fight because they would rather die in his place. However, the narrator punctuates the sin and hatred of Lionel as Lionel kills both men.

As Bohort does not want to fight his brother and prays, the author of the *Queste* uses syncope to illustrate divine intervention. A voice tells Bohort not to kill Lionel and a flame resembling lightening comes from the sky, separates them, and burns their shields. Both Bohort and Lionel are so afraid that they faint. When Bohort regains consciousness and notices his brother is not hurt, he praises God and hears another voice telling him to run to the ocean and get on the boat where Perceval is waiting.

> Lors hauce l'espee contremont, et en ce qu'il le voloit ferir o tune voiz qui lid it: "Fui, Boort, nel touchier, car tu l'ocirroies ja." Maintenant descendi entr'els dues uns brandons de feu en semblance de foudre et vint de vers le ciel, et en issi une flame si merveilleuse et si ardanz que andui lor escu furent brui, et en furent si effreé qu'il chaïrent andui a

> terre et jurent grant piece en pasmoisons. Et quant il se releverent, si s'entreresgarderent durement; et voient la terre toute rouge entr'els dues del feu qui i avoit esté. mes quant Boort voit que ses frères n'a nul mal, si en tent ses mains vers le ciel et en mercie Dieu de bon cuer. Lors oï une voiz qui li dist: "Boort, lieve sus et va de ci. Si ne tien plus compaignie a ton frère, mes achemine toi vers la mer, ne ne demore en nul leu devant que tu i soies, car Perceval t'i atent (193).

The narrator contrasts the two brothers as Lionel barely awakens and is still "estordiz" (193), while Bohort awakens to obey and continues to the boat. Pauphilet explains that characters like Lionel are "personnifications de vices" to provide the narrator with the opportunity to show the "symboliques victoires" of the others (*Etudes* 125). Bohort does not fall to temptation, while Lionel is still unrepentant. The supernatural voice causing syncope is a common element in the *Queste*, and shows the separation between the characters who follow God and those who do not.

Similar to these examples of Mélyant and Lionel, syncope is instrumental in illustrating Lancelot's inability to find the grail and exposes his sin, while also showing his repentance and renewal. While these previous examples have shown actual instances of fainting, Lancelot's syncope presents itself in the form of trances mimicking a loss of consciousness. Syncope occurs three different times, and with each literal awakening, he awakens metaphorically to understand his sins.[308] In the first example, Lancelot is pursuing the new white knight, Galaad, but finds a stone cross and a dilapidated chapel containing an elaborate altar and silver candelabra. Since he cannot get into the chapel, he returns to the cross and falls asleep. Lancelot awakens to see *li chevaliers de la litiere* arrive, but the knight assumes that Lancelot is asleep, and the narrator explains that Lancelot does not respond because he is suspended between a dream-like state and

[308] Applying the term from Maddox's study of awakenings in Chrétien de Troyes as explored in chapter three, the "crisis of awakening" causes the characters to react and creates transformations of identity (37, 41).

being awake, "Et Lancelot ne li dist mot, come cil qui ert en tel point que il ne dormoit bien ne ne veilloit bien, ainz someilloit" (58). The *chevaliers de la litiere* laments, but Lancelot is unable to respond even though he can see and hear the sick knight, "Et Lancelot ne se remue ne ne dist mot, car il est ausi come entransés, et neporec il le voit bien et entent ses paroles" (58). Using the term "entransés," from the verb "transer" meaning paralyzed by an emotion or afraid,[309] the narrator emphasizes Lancelot's immobile state, in between sleep and consciousness.

As Lancelot continues to watch, he sees the grail heal the sick knight.[310] However, the narrator explains that Lancelot is confused by the event either because he is too tired or because of his sins. Moreover, he adds that Lancelot's lack of reaction causes him many misfortunes throughout his adventures. From this remark, the reader can expect the repeated motif of syncope as Lancelot tries to continue his quest.

> Et quant li Vessiaus o tune piece demoré ilec, si s'en rala li chandelabres en la chapele et li Vessiaus avec, si que Lancelot ne sot ne a l'aler ne au venir par cui il i pot estre aportez. Et neporquant einsi li avint, ou parce qu'il ert trop pesanz dou travail que il avoit eu, ou par pechié dont il ert sorpris, que il ne se remua por la venue del Saint Graal ne ne fist semblant qu'a riens l'en fust; dont il trova puis en la Queste qui mainte honte l'en dist et assez l'en mesavint en maint leu (59).

The sick knight then reinforces the narrator's statement as he expresses amazement that Lancelot did not wake up from his sleep, and the squire states that it must be because he has not confessed a major sin, "Par foi, fet li escuiers, ja est aucuns chevaliers qui maint en aucun grant pechié dont il ne se fist onques confés, dont il est par aventure si corpables vers Nostre Seignor que il ne li

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309 "transer." *Ancien français: grand dictionnaire*, 2007. Greimas explains that the verb was first used in the thirteenth century.

310 The narrator adds that Lancelot has seen the grail before at the castle of the Fisher King. This episode occurs in the *Lancelot propre* when Lancelot visits the Castle of Corbenic (Baumgartner 249).

plaist mie qu'il veist ceste bele aventure" (60). Similar to the young ladies' reaction to Yvain's trance-like sleep in the *Chevalier au Lion* or Perceval's five years of wandering in the *Conte du Graal*, an unexplained state of stupor is associated with sin. After the healed knight and his squire leave, Lancelot's awakening emphasizes his separation from reality, as he completely awakens, "Lancelot se leva en son seant come cil qui lors a primes s'estoit esveilliez dou tout" (61), but wonders if he was dreaming. Approaching the chapel, he hears a voice calling him hardened and bitter, and telling him to leave because he is not worthy of being in the presence of the grail (61). Lancelot awakens metaphorically to realize his great sin, saying that he has lived in sin since the day he became a knight, "car des lors que je fui primes chevaliers ne fu li hore que je ne fusse coverz de teniebres de pechié mortel" (62). Consequently, this scene shows Lancelot unable to complete the quest due to sin and removes his worldly knighthood from him, just as the *li chevaliers de la litiere* took his armor and horse. This trance-like state of syncope separates Lancelot from the other knights on the quest, but is also a narrative prosthesis because the experience leads to his repentance. The reader knows that Lancelot fell in love with Guinevere on the first day that he became a knight, and a hermit tells Lancelot that he must confess, especially his relationship with the queen, and never fall back into these sins (66).[311] As the scene concludes, the narrator states that Lancelot sincerely repents and promises to never fall back into sin with the queen (71). As noted in chapter three of this study, C.S. Lewis discusses the irremediable rift between courtly love and the Christian religion (40-41), and the author of the *Queste* shows this separation. Lancelot's love for the queen makes him a great knight who submissively serves his lady, yet this same relationship is the source of his sin, and "la coupure

[311] As we have seen illustrated in *Lancelot du Lac*, Lancelot explains that he is able to perform such heroic feats in battle because of his love for Guinevere (66), but the hermit explains that God gave Lancelot all of his abilities and that he is such a great sinner because he has poorly served God in return (68).

est radicale entre la fin'amor et l'amour de Dieu" (Baumgartner, *Arbre* 103). Trances in the *Lancelot du Lac* illustrate Lancelot's courtliness, but trances in the *Queste* represent his sin.

Albert Pauphilet shows that one of the ideas that the author of the *Queste* insists on the most is "l'infinie patience de Dieu et l'espérance illimitée permise au repentir" (*Etudes* 194). Lancelot's character illustrates this point, as he will continue to search for the grail, enter trances, and repent. After spending six months on the boat of Perceval's sister's with his son Galaad, Lancelot hears a voice that tells him to enter the Chateau de Corbenic and see "grant partie" of what he desires to see (253). The second instance of syncope occurs when he sees two lions that he thinks he will have to fight, but a hand of fire hits his sword out of his hands and a voice tells him he has little faith because he does not realize that his Creator has power over all weapons. As a result, Lancelot falls in a trance-like state, not knowing if it is day or night, "Lancelot est si esbhaiz de ceste parole et de la main qui l'ot feru qu'il chiet a la terre toz estordiz, et tiex atornez qu'il ne set s'il est jorz ou nuiz" (253). While not using a form of the verb "pasmer," the author emphasizes the loss of consciousness with the expression of falling to the ground, "estordiz." The noun "estordie" indicates "une action inconsidérée, folle" in Chrétien de Troyes, and the meaning extends to illustrate a loss of consciousness from a state of shock.[312] Moreoever, the author reinforces the state with the adjective "esbhaiz." As seen in Marie de France's *Lanval,* and Chrétien de Troyes's romances, a form of this adjective is common to note a trance-like state due to love, but in this situation the shock due to the voice is evident as Lancelot falls unconscious. Although this state lasts for some time,[313] the narrator quickly says that Lancelot gets up to thank God for giving him proof of his lack of faith. Lancelot is sure that he is a servant

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312 "estordir." In the *Ancien français: grand dictionnaire*, Greimas also gives the noun "estordison" to mean "évanouissement" from the twelfth-century *Partenopeus de Blois*.

313 "Mes au chief de piece se redrece …" (253).

of Christ and passes the lions without harm (253). The narration does not pause on Lancelot's state, as in the previous instance, and Lancelot's metaphorical awakening occurs immediately when he realizes his sin of lacking trust.

The third instance of syncope arises as Lancelot enters the Castle of Corbenic and hears a voice singing glory and honor to God. As he kneels to pray and sees a bright light illuminate the room, the narrator explains that Lancelot desires to see the source of the light, but a voice tells him to stop, and he obeys. However, as he sees the grail and a priest who looks like he could fall, he disobeys and rushes in to help. Even though Lancelot is repentant and allowed to see at least part of the grail, "l'auteur de la *Queste* n'a pas haussé le pécheur repentant jusqu'à la perfection" (Pauphilet, *Etudes* 129), as he still misses the mark and finds the need to repent. Due to his disobedience, a wind as hot as fire immediately hits Lancelot in the face and he is paralyzed, unable to see, hear, or move.

> Et lors entre dedenz et s'adrece vers la table d'argent. Et en ce qu'il vient pres, si sent un souffle de vent ausi chauz, ce li est avis, come s'il fust entremeslez de feu, qui le feri ou vis si durement qu'il li fu bien avis qu'il li eust le viaire ars. Lors n'a pooir d'aler avant, come cil qui est tiex atornez qu'il a perdu le pooir dou cors, et del oïr et del veoir, ne n'a sor lui member dont il aidier se puisse. Lors sent il plusors mains qui le prennent et l'emportent. Et quant il l'orent pris amont et aval, si le ruent fors de la chambre et le lesssent ilec (256).

Syncope pauses narrative time as Lancelot remains unconscious and the members of the castle debate the cause of his paralysis and whether he is still alive. Since he resembles a clump of earth, the people are astonished that he has a pulse but cannot speak, "Si trovent qu'il n'est mie morz, mes toz pleins de vie; mes il n'a pooir qu'il parolt ne qu'il die mot, ainz est ausi come une

mote de terre … Et il le resgardent au pox et as veines et dient que merveilles est de cel chevalier qui est toz vis, et si ne puet parler a aux" (256). The debate continues until an older man with a great knowledge of medicine concludes that Lancelot is alive and that they should take care of him until God gives him back his health (257).[314] The people wait for twenty-four days and nights, and similar to the knight of the litter who concludes that sin stops Lancelot from approaching the grail, the people of the castle conclude that God has caused Lancelot to be in this state. When he finally opens his eyes, he laments because he did not want to be awakened, as he was allowed to understand great mysteries during his unconsciousness that he could not see before because of his sin (257-258). Once again awakening metaphorically from his unconsciousness, Lancelot concludes that his twenty-four days of paralysis are penitence for his twenty-four years of sin (258). Therefore, this final trance-like state "symbolise et punit son péché" (Pauphilet, *Etudes* 129). Throughout Lancelot's gradual rejection of the worldly quest and understanding of the spiritual quest, the spectacle of syncope that other characters describe as sleep, death, or unconsciousness represents his moral weakness and sin, and his awakenings then show his increasing awareness and his repentance. The *Queste* leaves Lancelot in a short-lived repentant state as he returns to Arthur's court, but as we will see, the *Mort Artu* again shows him vacillating between *amor* and *caritas*, between worldly love and love for God.

While Lancelot receives forgiveness and is able to understand some mysteries of the grail, it is his son, Galaad, as well as Bohort and Perceval, that achieve their quest for the grail. Differing from his character in Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte du Graal*, Perceval's transformation

[314] As noted in Chrétien's *Chevalier au Lion* in which the young ladies think sin has caused Yvain's state and state that God must restore his health, the characters in the *Queste* say that only God can heal Lancelot. The descriptions reinforce that Jesus is the doctor of the body as well as the soul (Imbault-Huart 162).

is not a major element of the story.[315] His sister, however, is the important guide that leads the three chosen knights on their journey, and the author uses fainting to emphasize the sister's purity and sacrifice. Arriving at a castle in which she is the only one who can heal a leprous woman, she willingly gives her blood, but faints and dies as a result, "'Dame, je sui a la mort venue por vostre garrison. Por Dieu, priez por m'ame, car je sui a ma fin.' En ce qu'ele disoit ceste parole s'esvanoï ses cuers por le sanc que ele avoit perdu, si que l'escuele en ert ja toute pleine" (241).[316] Her deathly faint illustrates a loss of consciousness due to blood loss, while also pausing the text to show her purity and sacrifice. Her faint and death then serve as a narrative prosthesis propelling the quest, as Bohort, Perceval, and Galaad continue to the Castle of Corbenic.

Similar to the way in which unconsciousness separates Bohort from his brother, and the unrepentant Lancelot from those continuing on the quest, syncope continues to serve as a dramatic separation at the Castle of Corbenic. At evening mass the narrator warns that the mood starts to change when a violent wind suddenly enters the great room of the castle. The wind is so hot that several think they will burn and several faint from fear, "Quant vint a hore de vespres, si comença li tens a oscurcir et a changier, et uns venz leya granz et merveilleus, qui se feri par mi le pales: si fu pleins de si grant chalor que li plusor d'ax cuidierent bien estre ars, et li aucun

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[315] In the *Queste*, Perceval mentions to his aunt that he does not know if his mother is dead or alive and discovers that she died when he left home (77), yet there is no mention of her fainting. Moreover, Perceval is already spiritually ready for the quest and is told to go to the Fisher King's castle to find Galaad. Arriving at the castle, there is one instance of syncope surrounding Perceval's character. Galaad arrives to help him fight an attacking knight, but then leaves, and Perceval cannot follow because he does not have a horse. Torn by the decision to steal the squire's horse and his desire to follow Galaad, Perceval faints under a tree. Instead of using the verb "pasmer," the narrator says that Perceval cannot stay on his feet and loses the power of his body, "Ices deus choses li metent si grant ire ou cuer qu'il ne se puet tenirs or piez, ainz chiet soz un arbre et li cuers li faut; si devient pales et vains ausi come s'il eust tot le pooir dou cors perdu; si a sit res grant duel qu'il voldroit orendroit morir" (89). He has a chance to fight to win back his horse, but loses the battle and cries again. After several temptations, Perceval hears a voice that tells him to enter a boat, the boat with his sister, Galaad, and Bohort.

[316] The author employs the verb "esvanir" for a loss of consciousness. This verb is not as common as "pasmer," and the only other time it has been used in the chosen texts of this study is in the *Roman de Thèbes* with King Adraste.

chaïrent pasmé de la grant poor qu'il orent" (267). As with Bohort and Lancelot, the hot wind, which represents the holy presence of God, makes Lancelot fall unconscious. This is also a key transitional moment in the text as the knights complete their quest, and a boundary maker that separates those who are able to see the grail from those who are not. As the text concludes, a voice tells those who do not belong to Jesus Christ to leave, and only the three chosen knights, King Pellés, his son, and his young niece remain. Nine knights and an old man carried by four young ladies enter just before the voice again tells everyone to leave except for the searchers of the grail. As King Pellés, his son, and niece leave, the bishop Josephes arrives and the twelve knights at the table see the bleeding lance and receive communion from the grail.

Syncope is essential throughout the *Queste* as it illustrates dramatically the divine quest. While certain characters faint after injuries that keep them from their desire to see the grail, syncope also separates the three chosen knights who finally complete the quest. Lancelot's trances are critical for his repentance and understanding of the holiness of the spiritual quest that he cannot complete in the beginning because of his sin. However his final trance is a form of penitence that shows a deeper understanding. Similar to the function of fainting as a boundary marker between two groups in the epics, syncope is a clear marker in the text that separates the spiritual from the worldly, the repentant characters from those still struggling with moral issues.[317] The grail is the ultimate adventure that tests Arthur's knights and redefines chivalry.

[317] As the *Queste* concludes, the knights learn that the lance and grail will heal the Fisher King and then leave the kingdom of Logres (271). When the three separate, and Galaad's soul is take to Heaven, Bohort and Perceval see a hand take the lance and the grail, and the narrator says that no one has seen it since (279). Perceval becomes a monk, while Bohort returns to Camelot to Arthur's court and recounts the adventures of the quest.

La Mort le roi Artu

The *Queste* seems like a conclusion to the *Vulgate Cycle* as knightly feats are condemned and the grail is removed from the kingdom of Logres (Hult 17), but the *Mort le roi Artu* is the final text of the cycle, and takes up the story exactly where the *Queste* ends, with Bohort returning to Arthur's court (Hult 15). Many critics discuss how the romance's themes interlace with the other texts, and Hult says that the *Mort Artu* is an alternative conclusion (21). Norris Lacy agrees, adding that it is "almost by definition, an anti-climax, recounting events that follow the tribulations, triumphs, and tragedies of the Grail quest" ("Sense" 115). In the beginning of the *Mort Artu*, the narrator states that the same Gautier Map who finished the *Queste* decided to end the cycle more adequately because King Henry wanted a conclusion for the story of the knights (182).[318] While the names of Map and Henry are anachronistic (Hult 183), they connect the work to previous romances in the *Cycle*, and it is evident that the *Mort Artu* is written to be a conclusion. The *Mort Artu* shows the moral consequences of rivalry, vengeance, incest, and adultery, and the Arthurian world self-destructs.

In the *Queste*, knights, most notably Lancelot, repent of their sins, and the spiritual is more important than the worldly quests. However in the *Mort Artu*, knights are again in combat as the text opens with a tournament in Wincestre, and the love of Lancelot and Guinevere is prominent. The tone of the romance is much different and the narrator prepares the reader for the destruction of Arthur's kingdom. Lacy explains that this change in tone is "far removed form the joy that might be expected to follow the achievement of the grail, simply because that quest is not an Arthurian triumph but instead a demonstration of Arthurian inadequacies" ("Mort" 86). As we have seen, Arthur is strikingly absent from the *Queste* and even tries to dissuade his knights from leaving his court. The *Mort Artu* now shows the result of focusing strictly on the

[318] All citations for the *Mort le roi Artu* come from David Hult's edition.

worldly matters. In his analysis of this final romance, Norris Lacy explains, "adventures are no more, the marvelous is virtually absent, the quest for the grail has been completed, and Christianized concerns are largely foreign to this world ... The text has been carefully constructed so as to emphasize that the impending downfall of Arthur and his world is inevitable ("Mort" 90). While the *Queste* ends with forgiveness and healing from the spiritual quest, the author of the *Mort Artu* removes all spiritual elements and leaves the characters without hope, but controlled by destiny and fortune, as the text shows. As knights are dying and Arthur's kingdom is ending, there are many scenes of distress, yet syncope is much less frequent, and the author commonly uses "angoisse," "duel," "dolente," "esmaiez," "corrociez," and "esbahiz" to describe the characters' emotions. Fainting or trances that do occur illustrate the declining prowess of Lancelot, Arthur's realization of Lancelot and Guinevere's adultery, and his despair after the deaths of great knights. Instances follow the traditional paradigm of a loss of consciousness after an injury or as an element of a *planctus* scene of mourning, and they emphasize the collapse of Arthur's kingdom. Most notably for the paradigm of syncope, the *Mort Artu* depicts a character using fainting as part of a ruse in order to manipulate emotions.

In the *Mort Artu*, Lancelot still tries to keep his identity and his love a secret, yet Agravain knows about his relationship with Guinevere and continually tries to warn Arthur. Injury frequently keeps Lancelot from fighting in tournaments, including an injury from his own cousin Bohort. Similar to love or sin, his frequent injuries continue his static state. However, when Guinevere mistakenly gives Gaheris a poisoned apple, Lancelot must regain his strength and defend his love. After this duel, the narrator says that Lancelot and Guinevere's relationship is obvious to the court, as they act "tres folement" (456). When Arthur hears the court's gossip and finally believes Agravain, Guinevere is condemned to be burned for adultery. Lancelot

arrives to save her, but Gauvain's brothers die in the battle, and Arthur wants revenge for Lancelot's unfaithfulness and treason. Leaving to fight Lancelot, Arthur permits his son Mordret to be in charge, but Mordret desires to seize power, and consequently, have an incestuous relationship with Guinevere. In the final battle against Mordret, Arthur refuses to ask for Lancelot's help and all of the knights of the Round Table are killed, except for Girflet.

When the narrator first mentions Lancelot, he states that Lancelot repented of his sin with Guinevere, as the *Queste* says, yet only a month after arriving back at court, he returns to his old habits and commits adultery again. The difference is that this time he no longer acts discretely and Agravain, Gauvain's brother, discovers their secret, "si qu'il enchaï en pechié de la roïne ausi com il avoit fet autre foiz. Et se il avoit autre foiz maintenu celui pechié si sagement et si covertement que nus ne s'en estoit aperceüz, il le maintint après si folement que Agravain …s'en aperceust" (190). Moreover, the narrator states that both Lancelot and Guinevere love with a "fole amor" (190). Lancelot is often called *fol* in *Lancelot du Lac* because of his odd behavior and trances, and in the *Mort Artu* his folly is due to the lack of moderation in love. There is a "change in direction from a love which inspires great deeds in the *PL* [*Lancelot en prose*] to a love in which the adulterous element is emphasized" (Kennedy, *Lancelot* 304). From the beginning of the *Mort Artu* the reader feels a sense of foreboding, as Lancelot has fallen back into sin, and the lovers share a *fole amor* that cannot be long kept a secret.

While Lancelot is often injured or upset, he only loses consciousness once in the *Mort Artu*. This instance illustrates that his character has changed from the *Queste*, and signals a return to the courtly knight serving his lady. Similar to *Lancelot du Lac*, Lancelot wishes to fight in tournaments to show devotion to his lady, yet injuries keep him from participating, first in Wincestre, then in Tanebourg, and finally in Camelot. Rather than being morally paralyzed as in

the *Queste*, Lancelot is physically unable to move. His desire to show his prowess becomes more important since his absence causes Guinevere to think that he is unfaithful. As opposed to the *Lancelot du Lac* in which Guinevere has confidence in her knight, Guinevere in the *Mort* is often "jealous and suspicious" (Kennedy, *Lancelot* 305), and more closely resembles her character in the *Chevalier de la Charrette*. At the first tournament in Wincestre, Lancelot's cousin, Bohort, injures him (218), and he must recover for six weeks. When a tournament is announced in Tanebourg, Lancelot feels that he will die of distress if he cannot attend, and vows vengeance on the knight that injured him (284). Adding to the spectacle, Lancelot's mourning reopens his wound, he bleeds profusely like a disemboweled beast, and faints, "Et lors s'estent del grant duel que il ot, et a l'estendre que il fet si li escrieve sa plaie, si en sailli .i. rai de sanc autressi grant com il feïst d'une beste acoree. Et il se pasme maintenat" (284). This scene combines lovesickness with injury, as his wound is the obstacle to his love, and the narrator offers a vivid image of Lancelot's state. Lancelot's loss of consciousness dramatically slows the narration as all attention focuses on him for the rest of the day. The narrator describes Lancelot like a man half-dead, "Tot celui jor fu Lanceloz del Lac en tel maniere que il onques n'ovri les euz ne ne dist mot, ainçois fu tot autressi come home demi mort" (286). Opposed to the valiant knight winning in combat, Lancelot is weak, injured, and unable to fight. Moreover, unlike *Lancelot du Lac* in which the doctor accompanies Lancelot because he cannot convince him to rest until he is healed,[319] the doctor in the *Mort Artu* exercises more control by convincing Lancelot to stay. Illustrating the focus of Lancelot who can only think of his lady, the doctor says that he will not

[319] In *Lancelot du Lac*, Lancelot is injured in a joust against the King of One Hundred Knights, and Gauvain begins to discover his identity due to his injuries. The doctor travels with Lancelot because he realizes that he cannot retain him and he does not want him to die on the way (1:624).

be held responsible if such a great knight dies for a worldly reason, "por nule rien terriene" (288).[320]

The image of the fainting Lancelot also links the episodes. Further emphasizing Lancelot's *fole amor* for the queen and relating his behavior to madness as in the *Lancelot du Lac*, Lancelot's messenger arrives at the tournament to deliver a message to Gauvain and Guinevere, but he says that the knight that he left must be mad. Describing the mortally injured knight that cannot move or speak, the messenger is shocked that Lancelot tried to come to the tournament (294). He adds that Lancelot is the craziest knight that he has ever seen, "il me sovint del plus fol chevalier et de plus outreement desvez que ge onques veïsse ne oïsse parlet en trestot mon aage" (294), and must be out of his mind, "ce fust grant forsenerie de teste" (294). While Lancelot's madness shows his devotion to his lady, it is also the cause of his and Guinevere's decline when their love becomes evident to the court. Bohort even tells Guinevere that she will be the cause of Lancelot's defeat, as the hatred and jealousy of the courtly *dame* will cause his ruin (358). While Guinevere's hatred may cause Lancelot to feel rejected and unable to fight as valiantly in tournaments, it is their mutual adulterous love that leads to their downfall. Critical opinions vary on this scene,[321] but it highlights the unsustainable courtly love in the *Mort Artu*. In the *Queste*, the adulterous love keeps Lancelot from the grail, and in the *Mort Artu*, the same sin causes his downfall as he can no longer please his lady, she suspects unfaithfulness, their

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[320] This scene also offers an interesting cultural note about doctors, as Lancelot pays his doctor for healing him of his wounds. The narrator states that Lancelot gives the doctor and the lady of the house so many goods that they are well-off for the rest of their lives, "après li fist tant doner del suen, et a celui qui l'avoit gari de sa plaie, que il en furent plus aese toz les jorz de lor vie" (350).

[321] Hult thinks that this scene is misogynous, while Catherine Croizy-Naquet thinks it shows continuity between the *Queste* and the *Mort Artur.* (Hult 359). Kennedy explains that Lancelot's love is no longer helping him achieve his potential as a knight, and Guinevere does the opposite of what the Lady of the Lake asked her to do in loving the greatest knight (*Lancelot* 305-306).

relationship lacks moderation, and Arthur discovers the truth. The *Mort Artu* shows the grave consequences of courtly love.

Throughout descriptions of Lancelot's injuries and his *fole amor*, a parallel plot reveals Arthur's complete ignorance that Lancelot and Guinevere are in love. Multiple clues and situations arise that reveal the truth, but each time Arthur refuses to believe that Lancelot would be unfaithful.[322] When rumors circulate and Arthur finally discovers the truth, syncope illustrates his reaction and shock of being duped, but also shows him as the unresponsive king. The scene is a turning point in the romance and the *Cycle*, as Lancelot is now the enemy. When Arthur first hears this news he changes color and becomes lost in thought, "Et quant li rois ot ceste parole si li mue la color et devient pales, et dit: 'Cestes sont merveilles.' Et lors commence a penser, si ne dist mot d'une grant piece" (460). He becomes pale as if he is losing consciousness, and the verb "penser" highlights Arthur's trance-like state. The narrator further explains that the sad and pensive Arthur does not know what to do, "De ceste chose est li rois Artus molt dolenz et molt pensis et tant a malese que il ne set en nule maniere que il doie fere" (460, 462). Similar to his trance-like states in the *Lancelot du Lac*, Arthur appears indecisive and frozen in time. Lacy comments on this "bland reaction to terrible news" and states that Arthur eventually appears even more "indecisive and weak, and this is a weakness that goes far beyond the characteristics we observed in earlier texts" (Lacy, "Mort" 89). Arthur finally speaks and calls for revenge, yet

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[322] First at the tournament of Wincestre, Agravain says Lancelot plans to stay behind so he can be with Guinevere, but when Lancelot shows up to fight and Arthur later learns of the young lady Escalot's feelings for Lancelot (250), he is convinced of his knight and wife's loyalty. Another clue arises when Arthur spends the night in Morgain's castle where Lancelot was imprisoned for two and a half years, and Arthur sees drawings on the walls illustrating Lancelot's love for Guinevere (336). He is "esbahiz" and "trespensez" (336) when he sees the drawings, but then becomes lost in thought after Morgain explains the love story, "Molt regarde sovent li rois Artus l'ovraigne de la chambre et molt i pense durement; et molt se tient grant piece en tel maniere que il ne dit mot" (342). Arthur then declares that he wants to know the truth and will punish both lovers (344), but again doubts the rumors. Furthermore, when Guinevere is accused of murdering Gaherin and must find a defender to fight Mador de la Porte, Arthur proclaims his great love for his wife (440), and is joyful when Lancelot arrives to defend Guinevere (454).

his strength is again questioned when Guerrehet doubts Arthur's ability to wage war on the stronger and more violent clan of King Ban.

All instances of trance-like syncope in the *Mort Artu* occur in Arthur and emphasize his separation from court and his declining power. In the following scenes as Arthur discovers his wife's adultery, he remains lost in thought, and again enters a deep meditative state when a messenger says that Lancelot won the tournament at Karahés. The reader sees Arthur in a perpetual state of syncope, separated from and unable to rule his kingdom.[323] Furthermore, the author shows Arthur's meditation intensifying with the descriptions varying from "penser," to "durement pensis," to "penser trop durement." Each instance pauses the action, as the narrator does not relate any other events, but the court, understanding the cause of his behavior, remains silent. Arthur laments that such a great knight is able to commit such great treason, but he continues to his room "molt pensis et molt dolenz" (464). Since the couple lacks moderation in love, and because of Agravain's trap, Arthur's men catch Lancelot and Guinevere in the act, and Lancelot becomes the enemy. Bohort proclaims that the affair that they have kept secret for so long will now start a war that will never end, "car or est la chose descoverte que nos avions tant longuement celee. Or verrez la guerre comencier qui jamés ne prendra fin en tot nostre vivant" (482). Repeatedly stated throughout the romance, this warning illustrates the unavoidable end of the characters.

While Arthur's revenge is at first solely directed at Lancelot's love for Guinevere, the revenge now becomes greater when Lancelot kills three of Gauvain's brothers, Agravain, Guerrehet, and Gaheriet, during the fight to save Guinevere from being burned for adultery. Just as syncope marks Arthur's reaction to the first offense, successive scenes of fainting define

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[323] "Et lors commence a penser, si ne dist mot d'une grant piece" (460). / "Tot celui jor fu li rois Artus molt tres durement pensis et molt fist plus lede chiere que il ne soloit" (462) / "Li rois s'embronche com il ot cez noveles, si commence a penser trop durement" (464).

Arthur's reaction to Lancelot's treason. The mourning scenes resemble the epic texts as the king sees his dead knights and faints uncontrollably, yet Arthur's mourning is intensified since his greatest knight causes the deaths of his nephews. Unlike the kings in epic texts who must fight an invading enemy, Arthur must fight knights within his own court because "the forces causing the end of the *aetas arturiana* lay within Arthur's family, his closest friends and himself " (Trachsler 31). Arthur's mourning resembles the traditional *planctus* scenes as he sees the dead bodies, faints, laments, praises their greatness, and also desires to die. He faints from his horse when he sees Agravain,[324] hits his hands together when he sees Guerrehet, and squeezes Gaheriet tightly and then faints, causing his men to think that he has died.[325] The narrator explains that Arthur loved Gaheriet the most, and his intensified emotions illustrate this statement.

Fainting pauses the narration to highlight the devastating loss to Arthur's kingdom, as well as the great divide that now separates Lancelot from Arthur. Moreover, the delay allows Gauvain to arrive, but he mistakenly thinks that the mourning he hears is due to Guinevere's death. As Gauvain enters the city, everyone is crying and telling him that he is about to despair, and added descriptions dramatize the spectacle and prepare the reader for the great distress of Gauvain. Again resembling the scenes in the epic texts, this episode depicts Gauvain hearing the devastating news about Gaheriet's death and fainting, "Quant me sires Gauvains entent ceste novele, si n'a tant de pooir que il responde mot ne que il se tiegne en estant, ainçois li faut del tot li cuers et le cors, si que il chiet enmi le palés tot autressi come mort, si fu en pasmoisons grant piece" (524). Although using the noun "pasmoisons" to describe Gauvain's prolonged

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[324] "si a si grant duel a son cuer que il ne se puet tenir en sele, ainz chiet a terre toz pasmé sor le cors" (516).

[325] "lors se pasme sor lui et tant en fet li rois Artus que il n'a baron en la place qui tote poor n'en ait que il n'en muire par devant els; et si demore en tel maniere plus longuement que .i. hom ne meïst a aler .ii. loees de terre" (520).

unconsciousness, the author does not use the traditional verb "pasmer" to explain the collapse. Instead, he describes the effects that the news has on the body, as Gauvain no longer has the power to hold himself upright and his heart and body fail him. Gauvain's mourning continues as he awakens to see Gaheriet, faints again and remains unconscious longer than before,[326] reawakens and laments, repeating *biax doux frere* at least six times (526), sees his other brothers, and faints often on their bodies, "et si se pasme sor els menu et sovent" (528). Just as Gauvain's distress causes concern in the *Lancelot du Lac*, the men fear that Gauvain will soon die. Recognizing that the sight of the dead bodies and the emotional distress as the cause of Gauvain's unconsciousness, the barons decide take Gauvain to a different room until his brothers are buried.[327] While other texts in this study note the role of sight and emotions in fainting, the characters in the *Lancelot en prose* are intentional about removing a fainted character from the source of their distress. From the doctor telling Lancelot to avoid "cuivre," to the knights carrying the young lady away from Gauvain's duel, to Arthur's court avoiding mourning in front of the injured Gauvain, to this instance of removing Gauvain from his brothers, calm and rest are notable treatments for fainting.[328]

This great distress after the deaths of Gauvain's brothers depicts the destruction that Lancelot's actions have caused and prepares readers for Arthur and Gauvain's revenge. Jean Frappier explains,

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326 "et el besier que il fesoit a il sit res grant duel au cuer que il n'a pooir de soi tenir en estant, ainz chiet a tot le cors Chaeriet a terre, et si est greigneur piece en pasmoisons que il n'avoit esté devant" (524).

327 "Si prenent monseignor Gauvain, qui encores gesoit en pasmoison, si le portent en une chambre si dehetié et si malade que il n'ist de lui fun ne aleine. Et tot le jor et toe la nuit fu mes sires Gauvains en tel maniere que nus n'en trest parole bone ne male" (530).

328 Another example occurs after Gauvain's death when Arthur's barons must remove him from the sight of Gauvain's body so that he does not continue to faint, "Il en fet duel trop merveilleus et se pasme si sovent que li baron ont poor qu'il ne muire entre lor mains; si l'en portent en une chambre por ce qu'il ne voie le cors, car il sevent bien que tant com il le verroit ne cesseroit ses dels ne sa plainte" (786).

> There is a chain of causes and effects. The ruin of the Round Table is caused ultimately by the sin of Lancelot and the queen. This initial case produces a secondary cause, the death of Gaheriet at the hands of Lancelot and Gauvain's determination to avenge his brother. This in turn causes Arthur's departure from Britain and provides the opportunity for Mordret, swayed by his lust for Guenièvre, to rebel against his father.
>
> ("Vulgate" 308-309)

Gauvain, who originally tried to support Lancelot when he was accused of adultery, also becomes vengeful after Lancelot kills his brothers, telling Arthur that he must not give Lancelot the option of peace (560). This scene is also a transitional point in the romance as the destruction is inevitable. War begins, and all instances of syncope that follow only illustrate the destruction of Arthur's kingdom, from Mordret's ruse to seize power to the great knights' deaths. Love is no longer a central theme, as Lancelot turns his attention to convincing Arthur that he is not guilty of treason.[329] Lancelot tells Guinevere that she must go back to Arthur for her honor and to remove her shame (602). The narrator mentions that Lancelot cries (602, 608), yet the trances and fainting that come to be expected of his character are absent. In the final scene with Lancelot and Guinevere together, they exchange rings and say goodbye (610), while Lancelot tells Arthur that he did not love Guinevere with a "fole amor," proven by the fact that he freely gives her to him (612). While the narrator tells the reader at the beginning of the text that Lancelot has fallen back into sin, "il enchaï en pechié de la roïne" (190), Lancelot ignores the sin and whether his love is morally right or wrong, but insists that his love was neither *fole*, nor unreasonable.

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[329] During the attack on the *Joyeuse Garde*, Lancelot tries to convince Arthur that he still obeys Arthur as his master (556, 558). Proving his fidelity, he does not kill Arthur when he has the opportunity (596), and all seems settled when the pope intervenes to tell Arthur to take Guinevere back as his wife. Arthur even questions if Lancelot really did love with a "fole amor" since he gave Guinevere back so quickly (606).

Lancelot returns to Gaule, but Gauvain will not relent on his desire for revenge, and the war continues. Arthur leaves his son Mordret in charge, but Mordret seizes the opportunity to take control of the kingdom, and as the narrator states, conquers the hearts of the vassals (656). This scene enlarges the paradigm of fainting, as a loss of consciousness becomes a way to manipulate emotions. Feigning fainting or death is a common way to achieve a goal, as seen with the sarasin in the *Chanson de Roland*, the young lady in Marie de France's *Yonec*, or Fénice in *Cligès*, but Mordret uses fainting as proof of his distress. As discussed in the introduction, syncope is also a form of rebellion, and Mordret manipulates fainting to defy Arthur. In this scene, he desires Guinevere as his wife and writes a false letter from Arthur saying that everyone has been killed in battle and that he is mortally wounded. The letter further states that Mordret should be king and marry Guinevere so that Lancelot does not return and take her (658, 660). To add validity to his false letter, Mordret pretends to be so shocked by the news that he falls to the ground fainted, "et quant il oï cez letres, si fist si grant semblant d'estre corrocié de ceste novele que il se lessa choir entre ses barons autressi come toz pasmez, si comença a fere le greigneur duel del monde" (660). Mordret knows that no one will suspect his role in the letter if he acts shocked, and he falls "come toz pasmez." His ruse is effective, as Guinevere's mourning is so intense that the spectacle would make anyone pity her, and the rest of the court and city join in the distress.[330] Syncope is not present in the other characters' mourning, and the author uses the spectacle of fainting as a sign of deception to distinguish Mordret from the rest of the group.

Now fighting Lancelot and preparing to fight the traitor Mordret, Arthur's kingdom continues to crumble, and the concluding scenes of the *Mort Artu* present several instances of

[330] "vos poïst en bien dire qu'ele comença a fere .i. duel si grant et si merveilleuse que il n'est nus, s'il la veïst en cest point, qui tote pitié n'en deüst avoir. Et li dels commence parmi le pales de totes parz, si font si grant noise et si grant plor … Li dels de ceste novele dura .viii. jorz toz plains, si merveilleusement que il n'ot onques home ne feme en la vile de Londres qui reposast se petit non" (660, 662).

fainting after the loss of great knights. While the scenes of mourning follow the pattern in the epic texts with gestures of pulling hair and beating hands, and fainting as an external sign of distress in the *planctus*, the number of characters that mourn is notable, as several mourn the death of Gauvain, but one laments the loss of Arthur. The narrator first recounts the death of Gauvain, and as the war turns into a duel between Gauvain and Lancelot, Gauvain sustains severe injuries and faints three times into the arms of his men.[331] Left in a semi-unconscious state with a head wound that will not heal, Gauvain does not open his eyes or speak, and his faint focuses the narration on his importance to Arthur's army as both the rich and poor mourn his loss (746). Gauvain's unconsciousness and injury pause the narrative action, as Arthur and the court delay the battle until Gauvain recovers. However, when the Roman army invades, the injured Gauvain fights for Arthur and reopens his wound (754). He asks his men to relay his request for forgiveness to Lancelot, blaming himself for his death (784), and his importance to Arthur's army is again evident as the king faints several times, pulls his hair, cries, and laments, "Li rois en plore et fet grant duel et se pasme sor lui sovent et menu" (786). Moreover, when the funeral procession arrives at the castle of Beloé, the woman of the castle sees Gauvain's body, runs to him, and faints, "si cort cele part ou ele voit le cors, tot ausi come desvee et le bese si come ele puet et se pame desus le cors" (792). Her loss of consciousness reveals her love for Gauvain, and as her husband hits her with his sword, she proclaims that she dies for her love. The knights must defend themselves against the castle of Beloé, but the city soon joins in the mourning of Gauvain because they loved him (794). From the people of the castle and Arthur mourning his injuries, to

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331 "ainz qu'il l'aient desarmé, fu il pasmez entre lor mains plus de .iii. foiz. Li mires lo roi vint regarder les plaies mon seignor Gauvain, si dist qu'il le rendroit tot sain procheinement de totes ses plaies fors uen, et cele estoit el chief bien parfonde" (744). Similar to *Lancelot du Lac* when he is injured in battle, Gauvain again faints three times.

Arthur, the *dame de Beloé,* and the Beloé castle lamenting his death, fainting emphasizes Gauvain's renown and reputation.

While Arthur has a reputation as a great king, the *Mort Artu* shows his gradual decline. When his kingdom thought that he was dead after Mordret's false letter, the collective grief of the people shows his importance, and when he is mortally injured in the final battle against Mordret, his knights mourn greatly (862). Yet, as the battle continues, only four knights of the Round Table remain, and then only Arthur and Girflet. After Girflet reluctantly obeys the king and throws Escalibur into the lake, Arthur becomes absorbed in his thoughts one last time, before telling Girflet that they must separate because his end is near, "Lors commence a penser molt longuement, et en celui pensé li venoient les lermes as euz; et quant il a grant piece esté en cel pensé" (876). While his trances throughout the *Lancelot en prose* illustrate his guilt or his declining power, this final instance emphasizes his loss and his approaching death. Girflet loses consciousness when he discovers Arthur's tomb in the *Chapelle Radieuse*, "Et quant Giflez entent ceste parole, si se pasme sor la tombe" (880), and he alone is left to mourn the loss of King Arthur.

Upon hearing of Arthur's death, Lancelot assembles an army to defeat Mordret, but arrives just after Guinevere's death. With a tone similar to the *Queste*, the narrator explains that Guinevere sincerely repented (886). Surprisingly, there are not many descriptions of mourning apart from the narrator stating that Lancelot suffers and is devastated.[332] Similar to his reaction after giving Guinevere back to Arthur, the expected trances and fainting are absent.[333] In his

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[332] "De sa mort fu Lanceloz dolenz et corrociez sor toz homes qua nil en sot la verité" (886, 888).

[333] Interestingly, in the appendix of Frappier's edition concerning the last meeting of Lancelot and Guinevere, both Guinevere and Lancelot lose consciousness when they see each other, and Lancelot is lost in thought when he must leave. In this episode, Lancelot has just fought Mordret's two sons and discovers an abbey where Guinevere is a nun. Guinevere is shocked to see Lancelot, "Et tantost comme la reine le voit, si li attenrist li cuers et chiet a la terre pasmee," (264), and Lancelot is shocked to see she is a nun, "il la vit en tel habit qu'il chaï a terre touz pasmez

analysis of the *Mort Artu,* Lacy says, "this romance is in a sense most remarkable for what is *not* there" ("Mort" 95), and Micha[334] also notes many missing elements that are found in the previous romances of the *Cycle*. An absence of syncope in a situation where it has come to be expected throughout the *Lancelot en prose* can also be added to the list of missing elements.

As the *Mort Artu* concludes, the narrator explains that Lancelot discovers the hermitage of an archbishop and his cousin Bliobléris and decides to spend the rest of his life there in penitence. Hector then finds the same hermitage and decides to join him. The narrator recounts the joy of the men to find each other, their days spent praying and fasting, and the importance of repentance after Lancelot's soul is taken to Heaven (904). As the men carry Lancelot's body to the *Joyeuse Garde*, Bohort arrives, recognizes Lancelot's body, and faints, "Qant il le connut, si se pasma de meintenant sus le cors et commença a fere si grant duel que nus hom ne vit onques greigneur et a pleindre trop durement" (906). Bohort awakens to lament, and his faint pauses and ends the narration on the greatness of Lancelot. Bohort's loss of consciousness highlights syncope's role as a memorable spectacle in the text that redirects the reader's attention to what the author deems important. While the *Mort Artu*, as the alternative conclusion to the *Cycle*, differs greatly from the *Queste* and instead shows the uncontrollable destruction of Arthur's kingdom, the author returns to Lancelot's repentance at the end and restores his reputation as the greatest knight of the Kingdom of Logres, except for his son Galaad (906).

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a ses piez" (265). Both Lancelot and Guinevere repent of their sins and decide to spend the rest of their lives serving God. As Lancelot leaves the abbey, he is sad and lost in thought, "il chevaucha une eure avant et une autre arrieres tout pensant et dolosant …" (266).

334 *Essais sur le* Cycle du Lancelot-Grail, 220-221.

Conclusion

Throughout the *Mort Artu*, syncope shows the reactions of the characters to the inevitable war and downfall of Arthur's kingdom. The characters' emotions are clearly and dramatically visible, from Lancelot's injuries that keep him from proving his prowess, to Gauvain's despairing reaction to his brothers' deaths, and to Arthur's realization of his wife's infidelity and his mourning the loss of his knights. Adapting the motif of feigning fainting, the author of the *Mort Artu* also uses a loss of consciousness to illustrate how Mordret effectively manipulates the people's emotions. Fainting from injury or distress normally follows the traditional paradigm with the verb "pasmer," while the author also employs a few other expressions, such as Gauvain's heart and body failing, "li faut del tot li cuers et le cors" or not being able to hold himself upright, "il n'a pooir de soi tenir en estant." Moreover, the language describing Arthur's trances intensifies as Arthur "commence a penser," "fu …durement pensis," "commence a penser trop durement," and "commence a penser molt longuement." The paradigm of syncope thus shows a variety of mental states.

Arthur's character remains fairly consistent from the *Lancelot du Lac*, to the *Queste*, and the *Mort Artu*. In the *Lancelot du Lac*, Arthur is continually lost in thought because he cannot attack the *Douleureuse Garde*, he regrets not helping his vassal King Ban, or he laments the fact that he no longer has the greatest knights in his court. In the *Queste*, he becomes pensive because he does not want to lose his great knights to the quest, and in the *Mort Artu* he enters trances because he is losing his kingdom. Although the *Lancelot du Lac* explains one trance with "oblia … soi meïsmes," the author(s) use a form of "penser," frequently adding "durement" in each of the romances.

Lancelot's character, on the other hand, differs slightly from romance to romance, as instances of syncope show him as the courtly knight obeying his lady in *Lancelot du Lac*, a sinner understanding why he cannot complete the quest in the *Queste*, and a knight struggling to please his courtly lady in the *Mort Artu*. Love trances define his character in the *Lancelot du Lac*, and expressions vary from "penser durement," "esbahiz," "trespansez," "toz s'an oblie," "regarder," and "forsenez." In the *Queste*, his trances separate him from the other characters, and the author uses newer expressions such as "entransés," or "il ne dormoit bien ne ne veilloit bien, ainz someilloit," while in all the romances, the author(s) describe Lancelot's loss of consciousness with the simple verb "pasmer."[335]

In the *Lancelot du Lac*, fainting or trances are instrumental in the characterization of Lancelot, Gauvain, Claudas, and Arthur, as instances reveal strengths, weaknesses, family relationships, shortcomings, and guilt. Syncope then functions in different ways in the *Queste del Saint Graal*. In *Lancelot*, fainting or causing other knights to faint elucidates a knight's prowess or weakness, and trances represent the complete devotion of a courtly knight to his lady. In the *Queste*, instances of fainting in battle, for example, only occur when there is a moral lesson attached, as seen with Mélyant or Lionel and Bohort. The same is true of trances, as the characters wonder what sin causes Lancelot to enter a trance-like state. There is no need for elaborate descriptions or dramatic images to show a knight's prowess because the worldly prowess is not important to the author. In the *Mort Artu*, knightly prowess returns, but instances of fainting and syncope only show how the prowess is declining. From the *Lancelot du Lac*, to

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[335] In the other instances of syncope, the terminology also remains consistent with the verb "pasmer," while a form of the expression "choir pasmer" illustrates Gauvain's injury, the despair of a young lady watching Gauvain fight, the mourning mother, Queen Helen, and Lancelot's injury in *Lancelot du Lac*, Bohort's injury or the castle's fear in the *Queste*, or Arthur's grief at Agravain's death in the *Mort Artu*. The only other variation in expression arises when Perceval cannot stay on his feet, "ne se puet tenirs or piez" in the *Queste*, or a form of the verb "esvanir" for the young lady of the *demoiselle du Lac* or Perceval's sister.

the *Queste*, and finally the *Mort Artu*, syncope redirects the reader's attention to what the author deems important and enriches the narration by allowing the reader to understand individual emotions, motivations, actions, and interactions with other characters.

Conclusion

From the first examples in hagiography to the later romances of the *Lancelot en prose*, syncope abounds in myriad texts and situations, and the spectacle attracts the reader's attention as it signals extreme emotion and contains numerous significations. Critics have discussed various uses of fainting or trances in literature, yet as we have seen, diverse instances of a loss of consciousness, paralyzed states of deep thinking, or even episodes of madness are all part of a larger motif of syncope. For example, Kennedy discusses scenes of intense brooding and trances, while Sutherland analyzes the language of the courtly love meditations, including the frequent use of the verb "s'oblidar," that we have seen in the works of Chrétien de Troyes and the *Lancelot en prose*. Mieszkowski also highlights several instances of fainting in order to show that a loss of consciousness is a common characteristic of courtly lovers. Not only a feature of the romances, Zumthor and Zaal list fainting as key elements of the *planctus* in the *chansons de geste*. However, as this study has shown, all of these different instances and aspects of syncope come together to illustrate a rich paradigm in Old French literature that includes the physical, psychological, and emotional. Throughout this study, my goal has been to show that syncope is a valuable narrative tool in medieval literature, and enriches each text in diverse ways. As we have seen, authors employ the motif to emphasize the focus of a particular genre, redirect the reader's attention to significant themes, characters, or events, and reflect the medical culture of the High Middle Ages by revealing perceptions and descriptions of syncope.

In imaginative literature, syncope depicts the pain of injury, emphasizes distress after a loss, reveals hidden love, shows the effects of broken relationships or oaths, illustrates the gravity of sin, and demonstrates the consequences of actions. In hagiography, a loss of consciousness demonstrates a saint's importance as a godly example, while fainting in the epics

conveys the ideology of the feudal knights and the ideological separation between two opposing groups in battle. The *romans d'antiquité* illustrate the increasing focus on love and emotions with swooning as a symptom of lovesickness, and Chrétien de Troyes's verse romances use fainting to present the struggles of courtly love. The prose romances then illustrate the diverse emotional states of the characters with elaborate descriptions of fainting and trances that reflect several of the previous uses of syncope. From the eleventh to thirteenth-centuries, the use of the motif of fainting increases, as medieval narrative becomes more elaborate.

Whereas descriptions in the *chansons de geste* are dense and concise due to the restrictions of verse and rime scheme, particularly the decasyllablic lines of the *Chanson de Roland*, the octosyllabic lines of verse narrative and then the prose romances give a greater emphasis on emotions. As a result, the details surrounding syncope increase. Fainting and trances alert the reader to an internal struggle or change in a character. These changing descriptions from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries are visible in three examples of fainting after the loss of a comrade in battle. In the *Chanson de Roland*, for instance, the narrator says that Charlemagne's distress is not surprising when he sees his nephew and begins to cry. He then simply states that Charlemagne faints from anguish after Roland's death,

> Les colps Rollant conut en tres perruns;
> Sur l'erbe verte veit gesir sun nevuld.
> Descent a pied, aled i est pleins curs.
> Entre ses mains ansdous ……
> Sur lui se pasmet, tant par est anguissus.
> Li empereres de pasmeisuns revint. (v. 2875-2881).

The loss of consciousness underlines Charlemagne's emotions that are already visible in his tears, and the narrator uses the collapse to punctuate the scene and portray his distress. In the *Roman de Thèbes*, Polynice also faints after seeing his deceased comrade, Tydée. Whereas the reader knows that Charlemagne struggles emotionally because of his fainting, the narrator of *Thèbes* explains the effects of distress on Polynice as extreme emotion in his heart that presents itself externally.

> Quant le conut, sur lui se pasme:
> si lil fait doel, pas ne s'en blasme;
> Polinicés fait doel estrange,
> sovent tert ses oilz oue sa manche
> des oilz plore, del cuer sospire,
> car il ot en son cuer grant ire (v. 7329-7334).

The psychological focus is also evident as the reader discovers that Polynice does not blame himself for mourning. Apart from the monologues depicting the laments, the details in *Roland* relate to action, whereas descriptions in *Thèbes* begin to focus on the sentiments of the fainting character. Syncope shifts from illustrating indescribable emotions to being used as a device to fully develop what characters see and feel.

The prose romance of the *Mort Artu* further emphasizes emotions and describes fainting as a direct result of the suffering in Gauvain's heart when he loses consciousness repeatedly after the death of his brothers, "Et quant il les voit et il les conoist … Lors cort cele part et se lesse choir sor els et les embrace, si les bese tot einsi sanglent com il estoient; et si se pasme sor els menu et sovent, si en fet tant par le grant duel que il a au cuer que li baron qui iluec estoient avoient grant poor que il ne muire entre lor mains" (528). The narrator amplifies the gravity of

the moment by including the perceptions of the other characters. While Charlemagne's fainting in *Roland* highlights the importance of his nephew, Gauvain's repeated fainting shifts focus from his brothers to himself as the characters discuss how to alleviate his anguish. The emotional turmoil is even more evident than the similar scene in *Thèbes*. Just as authors of the earlier texts use syncope to explain suffering, the prose romances, exploiting the expanded prose narrative, explain instances of fainting and the subsequent reactions more fully.

In this analysis, distress is obviously the most common cause of a loss of consciousness or trance. Whether visible in mourning mothers in the *Vie de saint Alexis* or the *Conte du Graal*, knights on the battlefield in the *Roman de Thèbes*, hopeless lovers in *Pyrame et Thisbé*, despairing parents in the *Roman d'Enéas,* or devastated uncles in *Roland* and *Mort Artu*, fainting effectively conveys overwhelming emotions after a loss. While instances emphasize devastation and the importance of the character to the individual or the group, they also serve numerous other purposes. As we have seen, fainting can propel the narration when characters seek revenge, such as Charlemagne's army in *Roland*, or link episodes of the story, visible in the continual mention of the mother's loss of consciousness in the *Conte du Graal*. Moreover, syncope can provide a space for characters to interject, as the pope does in *Alexis*, or signify a loss of power. This is evident with Soliman's loss of control in *Antioche*, and Arthur's fall from power in the *Mort Artu*.

In addition to distress, other instances of syncope occur due to injury, love, shocking news, fear, indecision, hunger, or joy. While the causes remain fairly consistent, the significations vary from text to text. This is evident, for example, in instances of fainting due to injury. Enhancing descriptions of blood loss, fading vision, and weakness, a loss of consciousness punctuates the scene by emphasizing the gravity of the injury or the intensity of

the pain. Characters become injured in battle, but the elaborate descriptions serve different purposes. From Roland's repeated collapses in the *Chanson de Roland*, to Raimbaut's perseverance in the *Chanson d'Antioche*, and Vivien's fighting with his intestines tied around his saddle in *Aliscans*, fainting in the epics illustrates the knight's devotion, and their strength, as they are not easily killed. While knightly honor and feudal devotion drive the epic characters, love is the motivating force for knights in courtly literature.

Epic knights faint, awaken, and persevere, while courtly knights show their strength by causing others to faint from injury. In verse and prose romances, knights fight in order to prove devotion to their ladies, and the action of unhorsing another knight by knocking him unconscious illustrates their prowess. For example in Chrétien de Troyes's romance, Erec is labeled as *recreant* and regains his knightly reputation by defeating others. Furthermore, in *Lancelot du Lac,* the young and naive Lancelot demonstrates his courage and builds his reputation by overpowering stronger knights. In addition to knocking out other knights, the male protagonists in courtly literature can also faint due to injury. However, in contrast to the epic knights whose fainting illustrates their feudal devotion and perseverance, instances of fainting tend to depict courtly knights as immobile because they cannot participate in battle or tournaments. In the *Lancelot en prose* for example, knights are either unable to fight due to injury, like the continually injured Lancelot, or near death, similar to the situation of Gauvain as characters fear that he is dying. Appearing static because of a trance or an inability to fight after a loss of consciousness becomes a distinguishing characteristic. Moreover, trances are indicative of knights who are courtly lovers. Beginning with Yvain in the *Chevalier au Lion*, a trance-like state is a sign of the overwhelming effects of love and obedience to his lady.

Another interesting aspect of the paradigm of syncope is the gendered phenomenon that it displays. It is evident that certain instances of syncope occur in both males and females, while others primarily occur in one gender. Repeated uses of a certain function of syncope in male or female characters create expectations for the readers. For example, men and women faint from distress, yet fainting dead as a sign of complete devotion is only present in females. From Aude in the *Chanson de Roland*, to the four thousand women in *Thèbes*, the mother in *Yonec*, and Soredamor in *Cligès*, these women show their fidelity to their loved ones in their emotional collapses. However, a text can change these gendered expectations to effectively redirect attention. For example, the collective fainting of a group normally occurs in men, yet the *Roman de Thèbes* employs this motif in a group of four thousand women. This dramatic scene captures the attention of the reader and elucidates the women's importance, while also serving as a narrative prosthesis to bring victory in battle and conclude the story.

Another example of the gendered aspect of syncope is visible in lovesickness that affects both men and women. Characters, struggling to control their emotions, reconcile broken relationships, or escape to be with a true love, faint and are lost in thought due to love-longing and suffering. Nevertheless, the lover's trance that pleasantly overwhelms the thoughts of the courtly lover occurs only in men. Yvain, although in hiding, is content to watch his lady all day, Perceval stares at drops of blood on the snow, and Lancelot fixates on Guinevere's comb, or wanders aimlessly on his horse.

Interjections by other characters further elucidate the role of gender in syncope, and illustrate the appropriateness or inappropriateness of a loss of consciousness in certain situations. Beginning with the pope in the *Vie de saint Alexis* who comments that fainting is unnecessary when there is still hope in God, and Soliman's son in the *Chanson d'Antioche* who tells his father

that his despair is unacceptable because he is not sick, interjections alert the reader to proper behavior and insist that characters quit mourning. The *Roman de Thèbes* differs from the *Chanson de Roland* because it suggests that excessive fainting is inappropriate for men on the battlefield, as the characters of Antoine and Polynice are told to take revenge instead of giving in to emotions. Chrétien de Troyes's romances *Erec et Enide* and the *Chevalier au Lion* then show that syncope is only appropriate for men and women of certain social statuses. For example, the narrator states that Erec does not mourn the loss of his father because it is not appropriate for a king, and Lunette in the *Chevalier au Lion* tells Laudine that prolonged mourning is not suitable for a woman of her rank. Gauvain often reminds characters of the courtliness of a trance, as in the *Conte du Graal* when he says that Perceval's fixation on the drops of blood should not be disturbed, or in the *Lancelot du Lac* when he tells the deeply pensive Arthur that his behavior at a dinner party would not be proper for children, let alone a famed king. Without being specific, Gauvain then adds that deep thinking is only appropriate in certain situations. From these examples, syncope is not strictly masculine or feminine, but more or less fitting depending on the circumstance.

In addition to providing insight into gendered fainting, the paradigm also reveals reactions to and treatments of syncope. Normally, characters wait for the unconscious individual to reawaken, but some of the verse and prose romances provide means of reawakening the fainted character, such as Gauvain prodding the knight with his sword in the *Conte du Graal*, the doctors from Salerno torturing Fénice in *Cligès*, or Claudas's men pouring water on him in *Lancelot du Lac*. The psychological focus of syncope reaches a high point in these trances, and the more extensive descriptions of the prose romances allow space for the authors to show the curiosity of the characters, the methods they use to reawaken the pensive knights, and the

questions asked in order to discover the source of the thoughts. These instances highlight the performance of syncope. In *Lancelot du Lac*, characters sound a horn, slam a door, and pull a napkin out from under Arthur, while Lancelot is awakened from his deep thoughts by shaking, yelling, water, and mud in his eyes.

Syncope causes concern, and characters try to distinguish between a fainted, sleeping, or dead state. Paleness or the color of the cheeks creates confusion, as in Marie de France's *Eliduc*, and texts often note a greater awareness of the body, such as the pulse or body temperature. While seemingly obvious signs, there are only five mentions of noticing a pulse among all the instances of syncope in this study's chosen texts, and therefore they attract the reader's attention.[336] These instances change the tone of the text as mourning ceases and characters receive hope that the other is still alive, or propel the narrative as they try to awaken the unconscious character.

As we have seen throughout Old French literature of the High Middle Ages, medical descriptions increase from the early epics to the prose romances. While the epics provide exaggerated descriptions of injury with Roland's brain coming out of his ears or Vivien's hanging intestines in *Aliscans*, the *Lancelot du Lac* illustrates injury more realistically with details of knights' compound bone fractures, crushed noses, or the smell due to an open wound. The texts do not mention specific medical treatises or herbs and remedies, yet it is notable that the increasingly detailed medical descriptions and instances of syncope coincide with the growing popularity of medicine and medical treatises in the High Middle Ages. Whereas the *Roman d'Enéas* presents in-depth portrayals of lovesickness with fainting as a key symptom,

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336 Guillaume notices Vivien's heart pounding in his chest in the *Chanson de Guillaume d'Orange*, characters notice Ismène's vein beating in her neck in the *Roman de Thèbes*, the girl who falls in love with Guigemar feels his warm body and sees his heart beating in Marie de France's *lai*, the doctors from Salerno notice Fénice's pulse in *Cligès*, and the older man at the Castle of Corbenic in the *Queste del Saint Graal* knows that Lancelot is still alive because he has a pulse.

Marie de France's *Lais*, Chrétien de Troyes's romances, and the *Lancelot en prose* provide the most examples of treatment for syncope and injury in general. As previously observed, Marie de France's *Lais* contain several allusions to doctors from Salerno and herbal healing, most notably the red flower in *Eliduc*. Chrétien de Troyes makes similar references, and also describes herbal healing in his romances, such as the ointments to cure Erec and Yvain. While some treatments are associated with magical ointments or potions, others include the importance of a correct diet, such as Erec's diet with diluted wine and no pepper. Moreover, Chrétien's works contain mentions of surgery, such as Guivret's sisters in *Erec et Enide* who specialize in healing, and the elaborate description of resetting a shoulder after Keu faints from pain the *Conte du Graal*.

The *Lancelot en prose* continues to depict injured knights receiving treatment from both doctors and hermits, and even includes the detail of Lancelot paying his doctor in the *Lancelot du Lac*. Moreover, the prose romances offer a broader picture of the act of fainting by describing perceptions. For example, characters recognize the role of emotions in fainting as Lancelot is told to avoid "cuivre," or emotional suffering. Unconscious men and women are removed from the source of their distress, such as the young woman watching Gauvain lose a duel, or Gauvain after the death of his brothers. The *Lancelot du Lac* also includes the detail of the tightening of the heart before a loss of consciousness. This description relates fainting more closely to a heart condition, and heart attack, as notable in the case of King Ban.

While the medical descriptions do not prove that medical treatises directly influenced the twelfth and thirteenth-century romances, they do mirror the contemporary culture, as medical knowledge and universities were becoming better known. As emotions become a more central focus in literature, instances of syncope increase to portray an internal state, and the outward

descriptions become more realistic. The romances provide a greater space for elaboration, and authors include medical descriptions, showing a greater awareness of diagnoses and treatments.

As well as studying syncope with the use of contemporary texts and treatises, diverse modern critical approaches enrich this analysis, especially the studies of Catherine Clément and David Mitchell. Using Clément's idea that syncope creates a delay, we can see that fainting slows narrative time, as the reader and characters react. Clément also describes different types of syncope that explain the diverse meanings of fainting in medieval literature. For example, social syncope depicts the separation of a character from reality or society, and often applies to depression, as we have seen with Garsion in the *Chanson d'Antioche*. Moreover, shared syncope illustrates what occurs in love at first sight, visible in the behavior of Eliduc and Guilliadon in Marie de France's *lai*. What Clément terms "héros-syncope" describes Lancelot's character due to his *fol'amor* for Guinevere. Similar to a loss of consciousness that creates a pause, delays characterize Lancelot's actions in the *Lancelot en prose*, as he is often away from court and the object of everyone's search. While I differ from the philosophical ideas of Clément's study, and focus on Old French literature, key terms, such as shared syncope, social syncope, and "héros-syncope," and the idea of a delay have allowed me to analyze numerous functions of fainting and trances in medieval narrative. Noticing the pause that instances of fainting and trances create elucidates the critical role of syncope in characterization, narrative development, and the significance of important themes and tropes.

David Mitchell's disability theory has also been pertinent to this analysis, as his idea of narrative prosthesis has many applications to medieval texts. An unconscious body distinguishes itself in appearance, and can be considered a disability due to the marked visible difference. Literature then uses the spectacle created by this difference as a narrative prosthesis to propel the

narration. Additionally, fainting attracts the reader's attention and the increased focus is effective in characterization, or as a "master metaphor for social ills" ("Prosthesis" 24), such as syncope representing Lancelot's sin in the *Queste del Saint Graal*. Similar to the idea of narrative prosthesis, Donald Maddox's study on awakenings in Chrétien de Troyes's romances enriches the analysis in the third chapter of this study. Characters have a "crisis of awakening" (37) that drives the narrative and changes identity, such as the notable example of Erec awakening from his prolonged unconsciousness to restore his relationship with Enide. Maddox's study primarily focuses on awakenings from sleep, but is useful to also analyze the return to consciousness as part of the paradigm of syncope.

In addition to studies that mention fainting or disability specifically, the analyses of several other critics enhance the understanding of the role of syncope in literature, with Rick Altman and Jean Frappier as two notable examples. Most visible in the epic texts, Rick Altman's dual-focus theory describes narratives with two opposing groups. As we have seen, fainting is a key marker of one group, such as the Christian army in *Roland*, or the Saracen army in *Antioche*. Furthermore, Jean Frappier's study of the *brisure du couplet* highlights Chrétien's technique of emphasizing transitions, whether of characters or scenes. As Chrétien often uses a broken couplet in a verse with a loss of consciousness, syncope's role of creating a delay becomes more prominent.

While instances of fainting occur in many other works, the numerous texts of this study, from hagiography, the epics, the *romans d'antiquité*, and the verse and prose romances, have illustrated the extensive motif of syncope in Old French literature of the High Middle Ages. From a simple loss of consciousness to paralyzed states of deep thinking, syncope is much more

than a dramatic spectacle, and it serves important narrative functions in a key period when medieval literature was becoming more elaborate.

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